

**Comment ID: N-18367**

Comment ID: N-18367  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charlie Foran  
3052 Poly Dr  
Billings, MT 59102

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Charlie Foran

**Response to Comment N-18367:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18368**

Comment ID: N-18368  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Aaron Young  
AJs Offroad Armor  
720 Washburn Ave  
Lamont, IA 50650

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Aaron Young

**Response to Comment N-18368:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18369**

Comment ID: N-18369  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Katherine DeJarnett  
916 W Southgate ave  
Fullerton, CA 92832

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Katherine DeJarnett

**Response to Comment N-18369:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18370**

Comment ID: N-18370  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. gary battles  
835 e. country view circle  
fresno, CA 93739

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

gary battles

**Response to Comment N-18370:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18371**

Comment ID: N-18371  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave.  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18371:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18372**

Comment ID: N-18372  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Phil Beauchamp  
Lincoln Electric  
1604 SW 127th Pl  
OKC, OK 73170

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

I certainly would not bother making the trip from OK to CA without this very important off-road mecca. With costs becoming so high to vacation, we, as a family have to plan trips that appeal to both our children and ourselves. This is one of the few remaining areas that would allow us to camp and enjoy the jeeps, SXS's, and quads that our lives revolve around.

PLEASE KEEP THIS AREA OPEN FOR OUR FAMILIES TO ENJOY.

Sincerely,

Phil Beauchamp

**Response to Comment N-18372:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18373**

Comment ID: N-18373  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Barnett  
3269 Roswell Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy. It is quite underestimated the value that offroading can provide to a community. The people come in droves, especially during the King of Hammers Offroad Race. There were thousands of spectators, all willing to buy goods from the local town.

Keep these lands open.

Sincerely,

Matt Barnett

**Response to Comment N-18373:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18374**

Comment ID: N-18374  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Nedad Agic  
32615 N. North Valley Pkwy  
Phoenix, AZ 85085

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Nedad Agic

**Response to Comment N-18374:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18375**

Comment ID: N-18375  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kris Tholke  
4610 Degovia Avenue  
Woodland Hills, CA 91364-3712

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would devastate the local economy. Many businesses in Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley depend on the visitors to the Johnson Valley OHV area. Restaurants, gas stations, markets, auto parts stores, hotels/motels, and other service related industries will experience a severe negative impact by the closure of the OHV area.

The Marine Corps, OHV recreation, and local residents and their economy are better served with an eastward expansion.

Sincerely,  
Kris Tholke

**Response to Comment N-18375:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18376**

Comment ID: N-18376  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. randall allen  
13055 kiso ct.  
corona, CA 92880

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy. The small businesses in JV rely on the business of the OHV community. Whether it is from gas, food, or automotive parts, the OHV use of JV supports the local economy. The Marine expansion into this area would close business's.

Sincerely,  
randall allen

**Response to Comment N-18376:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18377**

Comment ID: N-18377  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

The last thing this country needs right now is a worse economy

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18377:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18378**

Comment ID: N-18378  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Joe Aplet  
9526 laughlin way  
redwood valley, CA 95470

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy. Many of these areas rely heavily on tourism. Bringing in a military base will stop any tourism there, bottoming out some of the only income that these areas will get. Is the govt willing to put more places into homelessness, and economical drought for another military base? Move EAST and that isn't going to be a concern.

Sincerely,  
Joe Aplet

**Response to Comment N-18378:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18379**

Comment ID: N-18379  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy. Every time I go to Johnson Valley, I fuel up main and aux. fuel tanks, and buy all of the food and supplies I need for the weekend - either in Yucca Valley or Apple Valley. I know that this is true with THOUSANDS of other people travelling out to Johnson Valley every year, including active duty and retired Marines. Closing Johnson Valley to the public (even if there is a little piece left open) will have a devastating impact on local economy - especially with people spending more and more as time goes by due to rock crawling and rock racing becoming 'popular' and more mainstream. Thank you for regarding the impact that closing Johnson Valley will have on the area's economy and considering alternative areas to use for training.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18379:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18380**

Comment ID: N-18380  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Van Johnson  
8325 Sumter Ave. N.  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Van Johnson

**Response to Comment N-18380:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18381**

Comment ID: N-18381  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy. Every time I go to Johnson Valley, I fuel up main and aux. fuel tanks, and buy all of the food and supplies I need for the weekend - either in Yucca Valley or Apple Valley. I know that this is true with THOUSANDS of other people travelling out to Johnson Valley every year, including active duty and retired Marines. Closing Johnson Valley to the public (even if there is a little piece left open) will have a devastating impact on local economy - especially with people spending more and more as time goes by due to rock crawling and rock racing becoming 'popular' and more mainstream. Thank you for regarding the impact that closing Johnson Valley will have on the area's economy and considering alternative areas to use for training.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18381:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18382**

Comment ID: N-18382  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Grant Hullen  
2126 Prestwick Drive  
Discovery Bay, CA 94505

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy.

Sincerely,

Grant Hullen

**Response to Comment N-18382:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID: N-18383**

Comment ID: N-18383  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18383:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18384**

Comment ID: N-18384  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. William Garza  
9558 Grapeland Ave  
Las Vegas, NV 89148

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

William Garza

**Response to Comment N-18384:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18385**

Comment ID: N-18385  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18385:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18386**

Comment ID: N-18386  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dustin Braaten  
29620 NE 60th St  
Camas, WA 98607

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

The USMC needs to look at expanding East, and leave the Johnson Valley area open to the public. It would be a tragic loss to lose this iconic off road vehicle area.

Sincerely,

Dustin Braaten

**Response to Comment N-18386:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18387**

Comment ID: N-18387  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,  
Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18387:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18388**

Comment ID: N-18388  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,  
Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18388:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18389**

Comment ID: N-18389  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

No Alternative has clearly made any substantive, detailed description of how a Shared Use area might work.

I believe this is a diversionary tactic in the EIS process.

Due to liability concerns and the risk of the public coming in contact with unexploded ordnance, shared use is unlikely.

Due to budget constraints and the time required to clear the area regularly and prior to the public's turn to use the area, shared use is unlikely.

Due to safety and security concerns with the public having access to a military installation, shared use is unlikely.

Please remove the Shared Use Alternative, as it is not a genuine possibility.

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18389:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18390**

Comment ID: N-18390  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. gary battles  
835 e. country view circle  
fresno, CA 93730

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

gary battles

**Response to Comment N-18390:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18391**

Comment ID: N-18391  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. brad holloway  
skunkwerks 4x4  
3567 forrest ave  
dover, DE 19904

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

brad holloway

**Response to Comment N-18391:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18392**

Comment ID: N-18392  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18392:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18393**

Comment ID: N-18393  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18393:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18394**

Comment ID: N-18394  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The idea of the military sharing Johnson Valley with OHV enthusiasts is a "Red Herring" and it will not work. The military will not be able to insure that the area is clear of all live ordnance for public safety, or will not have the funding to clear the area on a regular basis, leaving Johnson Valley shut off to the public. There is also the risk of overflow from both sides that everyone must worry about from a safety and security standpoint.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18394:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18395**

Comment ID: N-18395  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Kittelmann  
9801 Culpar Lane  
Richmond, VA 23236

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Chad Kittelmann

**Response to Comment N-18395:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18396**

Comment ID: N-18396  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Rizzo,  
223 Hale Lane  
Land O Lakes, FL 34639

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Paul Rizzo

**Response to Comment N-18396:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18397**

Comment ID: N-18397  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18397:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18398**

Comment ID: N-18398  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18398:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18399**

Comment ID: N-18399  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Robert Sutter  
255 The Great Road  
Bedford, MA 01730

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use has become an important part of my families recreational pastimes. It is an activity that I hope my son will continue to enjoy when he is my age. Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Robert Sutter

**Response to Comment N-18399:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18400**

Comment ID: N-18400  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dustin Braaten  
29620 NE 60th St  
Camas, WA 98607

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Our sport is evolving at an incredible rate. This is largely due to the King of the Hammers event held each year at Johnson Valley. If the Marines were to take over the area, it would put a massive dampener on our sport. People need a place like Johnson Valley to enjoy OHV use, push the limits of their equipment, and step outside of the box to push the boundaries of our sport.

Sincerely,

Dustin Braaten

**Response to Comment N-18400:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18401**

Comment ID: N-18401  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. mike burt  
8836 belle rive blvd  
jacksonville, FL 32256

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,  
mike burt.

**Response to Comment N-18401:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18402**

Comment ID: N-18402  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18402:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18403**

Comment ID: N-18403  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18403:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18404**

Comment ID: N-18404  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Comparatively, there is a greater percentage of OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. This makes the OHV enthusiast a culture to be recognized. For tens of thousands of people like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,  
Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18404:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18405**

Comment ID: N-18405  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
Yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The importance of Johnson Valley to the OHV industry is incalculable.

There has been more rockcrawling equipment created for, developed at, and tested and marketed in Johnson Valley than at any other singular location in the world.

A great many desert racing parts manufacturers test their new equipment at Johnson Valley.

The UTV industry has discovered Johnson Valley as a testbed for their new vehicles.

Not only will the closure of Johnson Valley have an economic impact on nearby local small businesses, it will have an economic impact to an entire nationwide industry. Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18405:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18406**

Comment ID: N-18406  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charlie Foran  
3052 Poly Dr  
Billings, MT 59102

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Charlie Foran

**Response to Comment N-18406:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18407**

Comment ID: N-18407  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Comparatively, there is a greater percentage of OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. This makes the OHV enthusiast a culture to be recognized. For tens of thousands of people like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,  
Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18407:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18408**

Comment ID: N-18408  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Nedad Agic  
32615 N. North Valley Pkwy  
Phoenix, AZ 85085

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,  
Nedad Agic

**Response to Comment N-18408:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18409**

Comment ID: N-18409  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Garrett Morrow  
1220 Fredericks St  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93405

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Garrett Morrow

**Response to Comment N-18409:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18410**

Comment ID: N-18410  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18410:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18411**

Comment ID: N-18411  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Percentage-wise, there are more OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. For many like minded OHV enthusiasts like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18411:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18412**

Comment ID: N-18412  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Comparatively, there is a greater percentage of OHV users in the United States than there are of many minority groups. This makes the OHV enthusiast a culture to be recognized. For tens of thousands of people like me, four wheeling is a way to express ourselves, connect with family and friends, get away from life's problems and work through personal issues. It has developed into a culture in itself. This needs to be addressed in the EIS, as the impact on our culture will be greatly affected.

Sincerely,

Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18412:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18413**

Comment ID: N-18413  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18413:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18414**

Comment ID: N-18414  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Christopher Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Instead of expanding 29 Palms Marine Base, it makes far more sense to train using the un-used time and locations already available at Fort Irwin. That base was expanded years ago and has not been used nearly to its potential. Do not ignore the fact that the funding saved by taking the Ft Irwin option is the RIGHT THING TO DO. Do not make false assumptions that Ft Irwin could not be used to properly gain the extra training the current missions of the US Marine Corps needs. Marines can get what they need at Fort Irwin, doing so at a far smaller cost, far smaller infrastructure commitment, and utilize lands that are fully under-used, versus taking away lands used for recreation and tourism in the area surrounding Johnson Valley. Please, do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley!

Sincerely,

Christopher Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18414:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18415**

Comment ID: N-18415  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rhyland Schechter  
1521 Todos Santos Place  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Rhyland Schechter

**Response to Comment N-18415:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18416**

Comment ID: N-18416  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
.5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18416:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18417**

Comment ID: N-18417  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Joe Aplet  
9526 laughlin way  
redwood valley, CA 95470

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. Fort Irwin is our nation's army training center. The Army is supposed to be our heavyweights when it comes to action. The Marines are wanting to make 29 Palms BIGGER than the Army's national training center, for what? It doesn't need more space than the biggest military branch. General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps was quoted:

"But we see that's probably what the world is going to look like for the next two decades. A lot more information there, but we think that's going to be our backyard because this is primarily the littorals, because these are kind of the nasty missions and things that, quite honestly, don't require 20,000 Marines on the ground. They may only require a Marine rifle company; they may require a training team to go in and help train border police of some of the nations that we want to help gird up and secure their borders."

"We know we're a second land army; we've got to get back to our amphibious roots, we've got to – and then all of a sudden people started using that language. And then they became critical of us: Well, we don't need another second land army."

"And we're making efforts. We already canceled some programs that we not only didn't need but were way too big and way too heavy."

"We are going to lighten the Marine Corps. We're an air-ground task force. Now, it's going to take – it'll go past – it'll go to the 36th and probably the 37th commandant, but we are going to do it. And we're in the process of doing it right now."

Sincerely,

Joe Aplet

**Response to Comment N-18417:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18418**

Comment ID: N-18418  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
.1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18418:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18419**

Comment ID: N-18419  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. These should all be investigated more thoroughly before taking over more land. Especially if attempting to take over land that is already used regularly by so many people.

Sincerely,  
David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18419:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18420**

Comment ID: N-18420  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

The Corps has excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. For all that will be lost by the expansion into Johnson Valley, it is owed to the multiple use groups involved to consider alternative options with a clear and open mind.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18420:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18421**

Comment ID: N-18421  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Robert Sutter  
255 The Great Road  
Bedford, MA 01730

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. I support our nations Armed Forces but believe that this is an option that has not been properly explored.

Sincerely,

Robert Sutter

**Response to Comment N-18421:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18422**

Comment ID: N-18422  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18422:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18423**

Comment ID: N-18423  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,  
Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18423:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18424**

Comment ID: N-18424  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps has excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. For all that will be lost by the expansion into Johnson Valley, it is owed to the multiple use groups involved to consider alternative options with a clear and open mind.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18424:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18425**

Comment ID: N-18425  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Billy Nickel  
1269 N. Harvard Blvd  
Los Angeles, CA 90029

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

We need to know what makes the area east of Fort Irwin a wilderness area and why you're not looking into expanding to the east instead of taking over Johnson Valley. Any plant or animal you would find to the east, you would also find to the west. There is little difference in the flora and fauna of those two areas. In fact, I can provide you with pictures to prove that Johnson Valley has more animal life than the area east of Fort Irwin.

Please expand to the east.

Sincerely,

Billy Nickel

**Response to Comment N-18425:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18426**

Comment ID: N-18426  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charles Weiss  
Metalarchitect.com  
315 Dogwood Avenue  
West Hempstead, NY 11552

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. This option should be looked into further. Displacing many hard working Americans from a outdoor activity they love should not be an option. Many service man and woman come home from battle and enjoy going to places like Johnson Valley to escape stress and pressure.

Sincerely,

Charles Weiss

**Response to Comment N-18426:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18427**

Comment ID: N-18427  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps has excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. For all that will be lost by the expansion into Johnson Valley, it is owed to the multiple use groups involved to consider alternative options with a clear and open mind.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18427:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18428**

Comment ID: N-18428  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I support our troops but I also love to off road and enjoy all the freedoms that America has to offer. I would like to encourage 29 Palms to expand East instead of West. While this would take a re-designation of Wilderness areas; it is not currently used by the public and it would be easier to patrol than the current Johnson Valley OHV area. Furthermore, it would give the Marines more room to expand 29 Palms. Truly, is this expansion based on the REAL needs of the Marine Corps in the near and distant future OR is it based on the by-gone needs of yesterday? The way the political, social, cultural, and financial status of the world has appeared recently, it looks as though EVERYTHING is different than it was just a few years ago. Listening to the expansion presentation given by the Marine Corps at a couple of different locations, most all of the planning for this expansion was decided on a VERY long time ago. The world is a different place and continuing with this expansion without ensuring it is what the Corps truly needs is a mistake that will not benefit the Corps and will hurt a large number of Americans along the way.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Military base without re-visiting ALL aspects of what Marines TRULY need for the near and distant future. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18428:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18429**

Comment ID: N-18429  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18429:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18430**

Comment ID: N-18430  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps has excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. For all that will be lost by the expansion into Johnson Valley, it is owed to the multiple use groups involved to consider alternative options with a clear and open mind.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18430:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18431**

Comment ID: N-18431  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Gary Battles  
835 E. Country View Circle  
Fresno, CA 93730

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Gary Battles

**Response to Comment N-18431:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18432**

Comment ID: N-18432  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18432:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18433**

Comment ID: N-18433  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps has excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. For all that will be lost by the expansion into Johnson Valley, it is owed to the multiple use groups involved to consider alternative options with a clear and open mind.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18433:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18434**

Comment ID: N-18434  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18434:**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18435**

Comment ID: N-18435  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Brandon Lowry  
3639 Argyle Ave  
Clovis, CA 93612

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Brandon Lowry

**Response to Comment N-18435:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18436**

Comment ID: N-18436  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Robbie McIntosh  
2802 Lauren Court  
Marion, SC 29571

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Robbie McIntosh

**Response to Comment N-18436:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18437**

Comment ID: N-18437  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. damron queener  
201 grandpappy ln  
oneida , TN 378741

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. We already had Tellico Pains stole from us please to steal JV

Sincerely,

damron queener

**Response to Comment N-18437:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18438**

Comment ID: N-18438  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Brian Koerner  
Engineering Solutions  
1010 North Main St  
Harrisonburg, VA 22802

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

I think the military should continue using Afganistan as their training grounds....it worked great so far.

Sincerely,

Brian Koerner

**Response to Comment N-18438:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18439**

Comment ID: N-18439  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18439:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18440**

Comment ID: N-18440  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rhyland Schechter  
1521 Todos Santos Place  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Rhyland Schechter

**Response to Comment N-18440:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18441**

Comment ID: N-18441  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18441:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18442**

Comment ID: N-18442  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18442:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18443**

Comment ID: N-18443  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Richard Carter  
7723 Valmont St.  
Tujunga, CA 91042

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Richard Carter

**Response to Comment N-18443:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18444**

Comment ID: N-18444  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. mike burt  
8836 belle rive blvd  
jacksonville, FL 32256

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,  
mike burt

**Response to Comment N-18444:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18445**

Comment ID: N-18445  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18445:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18446**

Comment ID: N-18446  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18446:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18447**

Comment ID: N-18447  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Norman England  
1321 Dispatch Road  
Quinton, VA 23141

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Norman England

**Response to Comment N-18447:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18448**

Comment ID: N-18448  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,  
Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18448:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18449**

Comment ID: N-18449  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18449:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18450**

Comment ID: N-18450  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18450:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18451**

Comment ID: N-18451  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18451:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18452**

Comment ID: N-18452  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18452:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18453**

Comment ID: N-18453  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charlie Foran  
3052 Poly Dr  
Billings, MT 59102

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Charlie Foran

**Response to Comment N-18453:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18454**

Comment ID: N-18454  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18454:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18455**

Comment ID: N-18455  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18455:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18456**

Comment ID: N-18456  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Barnett  
3269 Roswell Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. Please keep these lands open.

Sincerely,  
Matt Barnett

**Response to Comment N-18456:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18457**

Comment ID: N-18457  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. randall allen  
13055 kiso ct.  
corona, CA 92880

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups. Even the most environmentally freindly people would agree that leaving JV open to OHV use is better than the alternative.

Sincerely,  
randall allen

**Response to Comment N-18457:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18458**

Comment ID: N-18458  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18458:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18459**

Comment ID: N-18459  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be affected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18459:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18460**

Comment ID: N-18460  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18460:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18461**

Comment ID: N-18461  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Eliot Towb  
9208 Quail Field Dr.  
Austin, TX 78758

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

I come from a family with a history of military service. My father served in Korea and two of my brothers are former Marines. I understand the need to have space for training men and testing equipment, but you don't need this particular area of land.

This is some of the best wheeling land in the country and the OHV community fights daily against the shrinkage of land available for use by the enthusiasts of our sport. I am sure that the base at 29 Palms can expand in other directions in order to leave the Johnson Valley for the mixed use recreation that it is currently for.

Sincerely,  
Eliot Towb

**Response to Comment N-18461:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18462**

Comment ID: N-18462  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18462:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18463**

Comment ID: N-18463  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18463:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18464**

Comment ID: N-18464  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Grant Hullen  
2126 Prestwick Drive  
Discovery Bay, CA 94505

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Virtually anyone who travels down a dirt route is considered driving an OHV. This means people driving in RV's and people in normal two wheel drive cars. Therefore many groups of people that may use Johnson Valley such as hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. need to be made aware and given the chance to input on the base expansion. 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to all these different user groups.

Sincerely,  
Grant Hullen

**Response to Comment N-18464:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18465**

Comment ID: N-18465  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18465:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18466**

Comment ID: N-18466  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Kittelmann  
9801 Culpas Lane  
Richmond, VA 23236

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Chad Kittelmann

**Response to Comment N-18466:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18467**

Comment ID: N-18467  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18467:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18468**

Comment ID: N-18468  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rhyland Schechter  
1521 Todos Santos Place  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Rhyland Schechter

**Response to Comment N-18468:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18469**

Comment ID: N-18469  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18469:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18470**

Comment ID: N-18470  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. California is known for its great outdoor activities. Many residents depend on these for stress relief and family time. By taking over Johnson Valley, one of the largest places for this to take place will disappear. Please Move East and consider using an area that is not so vital to so many people.

Sincerely,  
David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18470:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18471**

Comment ID: N-18471  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. dustin webster  
315 muriwood dr  
london, OH 43140

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with is such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

dustin webster

**Response to Comment N-18471:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18472**

Comment ID: N-18472  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18472:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18473**

Comment ID: N-18473  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with is such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18473:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18474**

Comment ID: N-18474  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Norman England  
1321 Dispatch Road  
Quinton, VA 23141

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Norman England

**Response to Comment N-18474:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18475**

Comment ID: N-18475  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18475:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18476**

Comment ID: N-18476  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

Beyond the typically defined OHV user, there are many other groups of people that access Johnson Valley - hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc.

All of these groups need to be made aware of the proposed changes and given the chance to add their input on the base expansion. To the best of my knowledge, 29 Palms has not made the effort to reach out to the full diversity of user groups who access Johnson Valley.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18476:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18477**

Comment ID: N-18477  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charlie Foran  
3052 Poly Dr  
Billings, MT 59102

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

Charlie Foran

**Response to Comment N-18477:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18478**

Comment ID: N-18478  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18478:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18479**

Comment ID: N-18479  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Barnett  
3269 Roswell Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. People from all over the country travel just to visit Johnson Valley. Please let future generations enjoy this spectacular location.

Sincerely,

Matt Barnett

**Response to Comment N-18479:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18480**

Comment ID: N-18480  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jake Protis  
4462 Windsor Oaks Circle  
Marietta, GA 30066

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. please help us keep our culture alive. some times culture is more important than plants and animals.

Sincerely,  
jake protis

**Response to Comment N-18480:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18481**

Comment ID: N-18481  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Ms. Starr Penniman  
1419 Wake Forest Drive  
Apt. 12  
Davis, CA 95616

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Hello,  
My name is Starr Penniman. I have been a part of the four wheeling community for almost ten years. I know many people that have dedicated their lives to this "lifestyle". It is not just a fun activity, it is certainly a lifestyle that has affected people in a very positive way. Without the use of Johnson Valley, the four wheeling community in a whole will be affected. OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.  
Thank you so much for taking the time to hear my voice. I truly appreciate this opportunity to express my opinion.

Sincerely,

Starr Penniman

**Response to Comment N-18481:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18482**

Comment ID: N-18482  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. Without the land, these activities that many enjoy cannot be sustained in the way that they are. There is a reason why Johnson Valley has become such a popular location in the few years it has been available.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18482:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18483**

Comment ID: N-18483  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18483:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18484**

Comment ID: N-18484  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

OHV use and the activities that go with it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. It will also affect the culture by changing the types of jobs available to the current residents.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18484:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18485**

Comment ID: N-18485  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Marie Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Please GO EAST MARINES!

Sincerely,

Marie Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18485:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18486**

Comment ID: N-18486  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Ms. Isabella Gould  
1113 Bethel Ave  
Beech Grove, IN 46107

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Isabella Gould

**Response to Comment N-18486:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18487**

Comment ID: N-18487  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rhyland Schechter  
1521 Todos Santos Place  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Rhyland Schechter

**Response to Comment N-18487:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18488**

Comment ID: N-18488  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. James Fuller  
7518 Cranes Creek Ct  
Winter Park, FL 32792

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

James Fuller

**Response to Comment N-18488:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18489**

Comment ID: N-18489  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world,  
we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18489:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18490**

Comment ID: N-18490  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Even if this IS the case, there is more room for them to train if 29 Palms expands to the East instead.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18490:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18491**

Comment ID: N-18491  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18491:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18492**

Comment ID: N-18492  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Norman England  
1321 Dispatch Road  
Quinton, VA 23141

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Norman England

**Response to Comment N-18492:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18493**

Comment ID: N-18493  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Even if this IS the case, there is more room for them to train if 29 Palms expands to the East instead.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18493:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18494**

Comment ID: N-18494  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk, Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18494:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18495**

Comment ID: N-18495  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

The Corps failed to justify need for 1990s-era simultaneous training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Even if this IS the case, there is more room for them to train if 29 Palms expands to the East instead.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18495:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18496**

Comment ID: N-18496  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18496:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18497**

Comment ID: N-18497  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18497:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18498**

Comment ID: N-18498  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I have been following the proposed expansion of the 932-square-mile Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms and the plan to take over more than two-thirds of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for live-ammunition training missions, mainly because Johnson Valley is known throughout the world as THE prime off-highway area - home to the famed King of the Hammers race.

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops. Even if this IS the case, there is more room for them to train if 29 Palms expands to the East instead.

I do understand the need for training areas for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18498:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18499**

Comment ID: N-18499  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. randall allen  
13055 kiso ct.  
corona, CA 92880

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

randall allen

**Response to Comment N-18499:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18500**

Comment ID: N-18500  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18500:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18501**

Comment ID: N-18501  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18501:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18502**

Comment ID: N-18502  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Grant Hullen  
2126 Prestwick Drive  
Discovery Bay, CA 94505

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. In today's world, we do not need to train for the movement of this many troops.

Sincerely,

Grant Hullen

**Response to Comment N-18502:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID: N-18503**

Comment ID: N-18503  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Craig Vasconcellos  
100 Ford Street  
Watsonville, CA 95076-4206

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

I want Johnson Valley to be accessible so that I can take my 2 boys riding or wheeling just like my father took me there to ride dirt bikes many times over the last 20+ years. There must be some other areas that the military could take over that would not take away from the off road community like this would. We have so few off road areas as it is and to lose this would be a huge blow to the community that I love to belong to.

Sincerely,

Craig Vasconcellos

**Response to Comment N-18503:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18504**

Comment ID: N-18504  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Rizzo  
223 Hale Lane  
Land O Lakes, FL 34639

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Paul Rizzo

**Response to Comment N-18504:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18505**

Comment ID: N-18505  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Michael Haley  
1882 Hidden Springs Dr  
El Cajon, CA 92019

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" I travel from San Diego to wheel in the area and the economy benefits by me buy gas, food etc. Please save the businesses and one of the only great open areas for wheelin' in souther CA.

Sincerely,

Michael Haley

**Response to Comment N-18505:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18506**

Comment ID: N-18506  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18506:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18507**

Comment ID: N-18507  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Joshua Gardner  
25373 Frosty Meadow Lane  
Aldie, VA 20105

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Joshua Gardner

**Response to Comment N-18507:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18508**

Comment ID: N-18508  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Christopher Hauser  
185 Wolcott Avenue  
Rochester, NY 14606

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

There is a huge concentration of OHV enthusiasts in the southern California area. Their "Mecca" for off-roading happens to be Johnson Valley. As so many off road areas have been closed in the past few decades, those enthusiasts have so few choices for their activities that the encroachment of the 29 Palms Marine Base into the area will not only devastate their culture, but will end up encouraging a sizable number of them to off-road on closed or protected lands. I would not be surprised if a decent number of them end up on the expanded portion of the base. The simple mention of SHARING of these lands by Marines and OHV is a complete joke...this will not be feasible financially, time-wise, or safety-wise due to unexploded ordnance and a number of other factors. The simple truth is, the loss of recreation lands in this case is unacceptable and will create numerous bad situations that will affect the OHV community, the residential and business communities around Johnson Valley, and ultimately create less-than-safe situations on and around the base itself.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley!

Sincerely,  
Christopher Hauser

**Response to Comment N-18508:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18509**

Comment ID: N-18509  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dustin Braaten  
29620 NE 60th St  
Camas, WA 98607

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture".

There's no other place in the United States that compares to the Johnson Valley OHV area. Taking it away from the tens of thousands of users would be a huge loss. Please reconsider the expansion, and head EAST.

Sincerely,

Dustin Braaten

**Response to Comment N-18509:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18510**

Comment ID: N-18510  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jason Schmidt  
1444 South Clinton Ave.  
Trenton, NJ 08610

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Jason Schmidt

**Response to Comment N-18510:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18511**

Comment ID: N-18511  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bruce Charland  
po box 171  
Littleton, NH 03561-03561

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Bruce Charland

**Response to Comment N-18511:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18512**

Comment ID: N-18512  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tim Ford  
35 Coles Rd  
Cromwell, CT 06416-2608

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Please continue to keep land open to the public. Here in CT, there is VERY little space left to legally enjoy our hobby. I definitely understand the importance of Military training, but there are plenty of other areas to do so.

The Military is meant to protect our freedoms, but in this case they would be taking it away.

Sincerely,  
Tim Ford

**Response to Comment N-18512:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18513**

Comment ID: N-18513  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture". So many people travel from around North America just to experience a place that isn't like any other place in the world right in our back yard.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18513:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18514**

Comment ID: N-18514  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. mike burt  
8836 belle rive blvd  
jacksonville, FL 32256

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

mike burt

**Response to Comment N-18514:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18515**

Comment ID: N-18515  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Gary Lawson  
7015 Inkberry  
Houston, TX 77092

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

SAVE OUR PROMISED LAND!!!! Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Gary Lawson

**Response to Comment N-18515:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18516**

Comment ID: N-18516  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Norman England  
1321 Dispatch Road  
Quinton, VA 23141

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The expansion plans for 29 Palms Marine Base pushing into, and taking over, most of Johnson Valley's multiple-use recreation area appears to be ignorant of the process in doing a proper EIS. There are numerous areas that were left out of the EIS studies, including the impacts on an entire culture of recreationalists...multiple cultures actually.

The activities seen in the Johnson Valley Recreation Area are not just some pop-fad or single event taking place, never to be seen again, but instead are truly "lifestyles", dedicated to participation in a certain activity. Whether it be the rocketeer, the wind-sailer, the rock hound, the off-roader, or any other of the large number of activities taking place in the area, the individual participants invest tens of thousands of dollars, if not hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars in order to participate. With that much invested, it proves that these activities go far beyond an "intermittent hobby" and are actually in a classification comparable to an entire culture of their own...very large cultures at that.

To ignore something as great as a culture, many cultures in-fact, combined with the fact that Johnson Valley happens to be the "Mecca" of many of those cultures (especially in the off-road world), again shows that the EIS was NOT completed correctly and that the choice to expand into Johnson Valley would be a travesty against a large number of Americans, who are supposed to be protected by the EIS. There are reasons the EIS is a legal process...the way the EIS for the 29 Palms Marine Base expansion has been handled has NOT followed the reasoning for doing an EIS in the first place.

The cultures driven by the unique recreation activities possible in Johnson Valley would be GREATLY impacted by the 29 Palms Base expansion. Do the EIS right, or DO NOT expand the base.

Sincerely,

Norman England

**Response to Comment N-18516:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18517**

Comment ID: N-18517  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Norman England  
1321 Dispatch Road  
Quinton, VA 23141

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

There is a huge concentration of OHV enthusiasts in the southern California area. Their "Mecca" for off-roading happens to be Johnson Valley. As so many off road areas have been closed in the past few decades, those enthusiasts have so few choices for their activities that the encroachment of the 29 Palms Marine Base into the area will not only devastate their culture, but will end up encouraging a sizable number of them to off-road on closed or protected lands. I would not be surprised if a decent number of them end up on the expanded portion of the base. The simple mention of SHARING of these lands by Marines and OHV is a complete joke...this will not be feasible financially, time-wise, or safety-wise due to unexploded ordinance and a number of other factors. The simple truth is, the loss of recreation lands in this case is unacceptable and will create numerous bad situations that will affect the OHV community, the residential and business communities around Johnson Valley, and ultimately create less-than-safe situations on and around the base itself.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley!

Sincerely,

Norman England

**Response to Comment N-18517:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18518**

Comment ID: N-18518  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18518:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18519**

Comment ID: N-18519  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18519:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18520**

Comment ID: N-18520  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Along with the other multiple uses, it is THE Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The King of the Hammers race has made Johnson Valley a household name throughout the world. I doubt that the USMC realizes the full importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" that it entails.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18520:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18521**

Comment ID: N-18521  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The expansion plans for 29 Palms Marine Base pushing into, and taking over, most of Johnson Valley's multiple-use recreation area appears to be ignorant of the process in doing a proper EIS. There are numerous areas that were left out of the EIS studies, including the impacts on an entire culture of recreationalists...multiple cultures actually.

The activities seen in the Johnson Valley Recreation Area are not just some pop-fad or single event taking place, never to be seen again, but instead are truly "lifestyles", dedicated to participation in a certain activity. Whether it be the rocketeer, the wind-sailer, the rock hound, the off-roader, or any other of the large number of activities taking place in the area, the individual participants invest tens of thousands of dollars, if not hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars in order to participate. With that much invested, it proves that these activities go far beyond an "intermittent hobby" and are actually in a classification comparable to an entire culture of their own...very large cultures at that.

To ignore something as great as a culture, many cultures in-fact, combined with the fact that Johnson Valley happens to be the "Mecca" of many of those cultures (especially in the off-road world), again shows that the EIS was NOT completed correctly and that the choice to expand into Johnson Valley would be a travesty against a large number of Americans, who are supposed to be protected by the EIS. There are reasons the EIS is a legal process...the way the EIS for the 29 Palms Marine Base expansion has been handled has NOT followed the reasoning for doing an EIS in the first place.

The cultures driven by the unique recreation activities possible in Johnson Valley would be GREATLY impacted by the 29 Palms Base expansion. Do the EIS right, or DO NOT expand the base.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18521:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18522**

Comment ID: N-18522  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jeremy Ford  
203 Cadillac St  
Kannapolis, NC 28083

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Jeremy Ford

**Response to Comment N-18522:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18523**

Comment ID: N-18523  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Russ Lemmer  
231 east second street  
Oglesby, IL 61348

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Russ Lemmer

**Response to Comment N-18523:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18524**

Comment ID: N-18524  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. nik semjonovs  
3208 regency woods pl  
imperial, MO 63052

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Please do not take away this precious land that people from all over the country (and world) come to visit and experience the culture of people there along with the beautiful landscape. It is important to keep these resources open to all.

Sincerely,

nik semjonovs

**Response to Comment N-18524:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18525**

Comment ID: N-18525  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Donald Buhrmaster  
525 Center St  
Mt Pleasant, SC 29454

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

The above statement definatly rings true to my family. We have traveled across country 3 times now just for the chance to visit such a wonderful vast off road opertunity that Johnson Valley provides us.  
I ask that you explore all available options for your expansion and realize that there are many of us that will experence true loss if this opertunity is taken away.  
Thank you for taking the time to review these letters.  
Donnie

Sincerely,  
Donald Buhrmaster

**Response to Comment N-18525:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18526**

Comment ID: N-18526  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18526:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18527**

Comment ID: N-18527  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Along with the other multiple uses, it is THE Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel in order to experience it. The King of the Hammers race has made Johnson Valley a household name throughout the world. I doubt that the USMC realizes the full importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" that it entails.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18527:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18528**

Comment ID: N-18528  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
Yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

There is a huge concentration of OHV enthusiasts in the southern California area. Their "Mecca" for off-roading happens to be Johnson Valley. As so many off road areas have been closed in the past few decades, those enthusiasts have so few choices for their activities that the encroachment of the 29 Palms Marine Base into the area will not only devastate their culture, but will end up encouraging a sizable number of them to off-road on closed or protected lands. I would not be surprised if a decent number of them end up on the expanded portion of the base. The simple mention of SHARING of these lands by Marines and OHV is a complete joke...this will not be feasible financially, time-wise, or safety-wise due to unexploded ordnance and a number of other factors. The simple truth is, the loss of recreation lands in this case is unacceptable and will create numerous bad situations that will affect the OHV community, the residential and business communities around Johnson Valley, and ultimately create less-than-safe situations on and around the base itself.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley!

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18528:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18529**

Comment ID: N-18529  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Along with the other multiple uses, it is THE Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel in order to experience it. The King of the Hammers race has made Johnson Valley a household name throughout the world. I doubt that the USMC realizes the full importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" that it entails.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18529:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18530**

Comment ID: N-18530  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Charlie Foran  
3052 Poly Dr  
Billings, MT 59102

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Charlie Foran

**Response to Comment N-18530:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18531**

Comment ID: N-18531  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Upon trying to find the proper mailing address for sending in my comments, I realized that it was not included in the DEIS document and was VERY difficult difficult to find, if not excluded, from every other typical place a concerned citizen may look when they try to find a way to submit any comments they have. I had to rely on a friend who finally dug it up on the Federal Register. How many Americans would know to look on the Federal Register to find an address so important to submitting their comments DURING A PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD? This alone is enough to demonstrate that people are NOT encouraged to submit their comments and views on this very important subject that affects millions of people.

Due to this major oversight (or possible planned act of discouraging the public to comment), a large percentage of the public may have not found a way to submit their opinions. This means the address(es) should be posted clearly and VERY publicly and the time-period for comments extended.

Furthermore, the amount of time provided for the public comment period is too short for the public to go thoroughly over the documents.

That is two-strikes against the way the public comment period has been handled and all-the-more reason to review what has gone wrong, correct the blatant mistakes, and extend the public comment period to a length of time that satisfies the condition that Americans get a truly fair shot at reviewing all of the documents and issues and having a simple and effective way for them to submit their comments because this time, you'll actually provide the mailing address in locations where EVERYONE who is interested, can find it.

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18531:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID: N-18532**

Comment ID: N-18532  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Frank Stephen  
40803 Blacow rd  
Fremont, CA 94538

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"!!!!!!!

Sincerely,

Frank Stephen

**Response to Comment N-18532:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18533**

Comment ID: N-18533  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Jennifer Stephen  
40803 Blacow rd  
Fremont, CA 94538

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Jennifer Stephen

**Response to Comment N-18533:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18534**

Comment ID: N-18534  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kurt Millard  
7937 Stagecoach Road  
Cross Plains, WI 53528

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Kurt Millard

**Response to Comment N-18534:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18535**

Comment ID: N-18535  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Aaron Young  
AJs Offroad Armor  
720 Washburn Ave.  
Lamont, IA 50650

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Aaron Young

**Response to Comment N-18535:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18536**

Comment ID: N-18536  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Cody Tapie  
1501 Indian School RD NE  
apt H110  
Albuquerque, NM 87532

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture". I one day wish to be able to four wheel in this area and experience the challenging terrain no other place on other can simulate. Please keep Johnson Valley open to the public.

Sincerely,

Cody Tapie

**Response to Comment N-18536:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18537**

Comment ID: N-18537  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rick DeJarnett  
916 W Southgate ave  
Fullerton, CA 92832

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Rick DeJarnett

**Response to Comment N-18537:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18538**

Comment ID: N-18538  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. ron webb  
5440 morehouse dr  
san diego, CA 92121

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

ron webb

**Response to Comment N-18538:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18539**

Comment ID: N-18539  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dustin Webster  
10117 Three Oaks Way  
Santee, CA 92071

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

There is a huge concentration of OHV enthusiasts in the southern California area. Their "Mecca" for off-roading happens to be Johnson Valley. As so many off road areas have been closed in the past few decades, those enthusiasts have so few choices for their activities that the encroachment of the 29 Palms Marine Base into the area will not only devastate their culture, but will end up encouraging a sizable number of them to off-road on closed or protected lands. I would not be surprised if a decent number of them end up on the expanded portion of the base. The simple mention of SHARING of these lands by Marines and OHV is a complete joke...this will not be feasible financially, time-wise, or safety-wise due to unexploded ordinance and a number of other factors. The simple truth is, the loss of recreation lands in this case is unacceptable and will create numerous bad situations that will affect the OHV community, the residential and business communities around Johnson Valley, and ultimately create less-than-safe situations on and around the base itself.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley!

Sincerely,

Dustin Webster

**Response to Comment N-18539:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18540**

Comment ID: N-18540  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. gary battles  
835 e. country view circle  
fresno, CA 93739

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

gary battles

**Response to Comment N-18540:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18541**

Comment ID: N-18541  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rod Polomski  
1255 Marina Blvd  
Bullhead city , AZ 86442

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road riding that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Rod Polomski

**Response to Comment N-18541:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18542**

Comment ID: N-18542  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture". Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18542:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18543**

Comment ID: N-18543  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Along with the other multiple uses, it is THE Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The King of the Hammers race has made Johnson Valley a household name throughout the world. I doubt that the USMC realizes the full importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" that it entails.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18543:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18544**

Comment ID: N-18544  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Joe Haugen  
2040 W. 10th Ave. #103  
Broomfield, CO 80020

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture". By closing down Johnson Valley the United States Marine Corps is limiting future investment in outdoor activities and experiences with friends and family, even if those activities are not the traditional means of outdoor land use such as hiking or camping. Wilderness areas were meant to be shared responsibly by all who care enough to visit and enjoy the dwindling space available.

Sincerely,  
Joe Haugen

**Response to Comment N-18544:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18545**

Comment ID: N-18545  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. J Bard  
P.O. Box 4391  
Chatsworth, CA 91313

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

J Bard

**Response to Comment N-18545:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18546**

Comment ID: N-18546  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kenton Matchell  
6412 wexford circle  
citrus heights , CA 95621

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"  
Please don't take it from us.

Sincerely,

Kenton Matchell

**Response to Comment N-18546:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18547**

Comment ID: N-18547  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Barnett  
3269 Roswell Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area IS NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,  
Matt Barnett

**Response to Comment N-18547:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18548**

Comment ID: N-18548  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. chris bowman  
po box 307  
mountain home, ID 83647

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
.1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

It is truly a unique area that I travel over a thousand miles round trip just to be able to enjoy the magnificent trail system. Without JV I would have no reason to even travel to the southern parts of California.

Sincerely,

chris bowman

**Response to Comment N-18548:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18549**

Comment ID: N-18549  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matthew Andino  
po box 1854  
goleta, CA 93116

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Matthew Andino

**Response to Comment N-18549:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18550**

Comment ID: N-18550  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

It is a beautiful place for families to grow and bond

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18550:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18551**

Comment ID: N-18551  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18551:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18552**

Comment ID: N-18552  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Along with the other multiple uses, it is THE Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel in order to experience it. The King of the Hammers race has made Johnson Valley a household name throughout the world. I doubt that the USMC realizes the full importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture" that it entails.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,  
Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18552:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18553**

Comment ID: N-18553  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Brandon Pollock  
4225 Marlow  
colorado springs, CO 80916

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Brandon Pollock

**Response to Comment N-18553:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.



**Comment ID: N-18555**

Comment ID: N-18555  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Van Johnson  
8325 Sumter Ave. N.  
Brooklyn Park, MN 55445

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-road that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture"

Sincerely,

Van Johnson

**Response to Comment N-18555:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18556**

Comment ID: N-18556  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18556:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18557**

Comment ID: N-18557  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. mike burt  
8836 belle rive blvd  
jacksonville, FL 32256

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

mike burt

**Response to Comment N-18557:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18558**

Comment ID: N-18558  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. alex pieper  
21birch run drive  
piscataway, NJ 08854

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. So that the larg stay the same.

Sincerely,

alex pieper

**Response to Comment N-18558:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18559**

Comment ID: N-18559  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,  
Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18559:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18560**

Comment ID: N-18560  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
Yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I support our troops but i alsos love to off road and enjoy all the freedoms that america has to offer. I would like to encourage 29 Palms to expand East instead of West. While this would take a re-designation of Wilderness areas; it is not currently used by the public and it would be easier to patrol than the current Johnson Valley OHV area. Furthermore, it would give the Marines more room to expand 29 Palms. Truly, is this expansion based on the REAL needs of the Marine Corps in the near and distant future OR is it based on the by-gone needs of yesterday? The way the political, social, cultural, and financial status of the world has appeared recently, it looks as though EVERYTHING is different than it was just a few years ago. Listening to the expansion presentation given by the Marine Corps at a couple of different locations, most all of the planning for this expansion was decided on a VERY long time ago. The world is a different place and continuing with this expansion without ensuring it is what the Corps truly needs is a mistake that will not benefit the Corps and will hurt a large number of Americans along the way.

DO NOT expand the 29 Palms Military base without re-visiting ALL aspects of what Marines TRULY need for the near and distant future.  
Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18560:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID: N-18561**

Comment ID: N-18561  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Joshua Cauthen  
1470 Aiken Road  
Bogart, GA 30622

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Joshua Cauthen

**Response to Comment N-18561:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18562**

Comment ID: N-18562  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jake Protis  
4462 Windsor Oaks Circle  
Marietta, GA 30066

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Jake Protis

**Response to Comment N-18562:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18563**

Comment ID: N-18563  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18563:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18564**

Comment ID: N-18564  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18564:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18565**

Comment ID: N-18565  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. James Fuller  
7518 Cranes Creek Ct  
Winter Park, FL 32792

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,  
James Fuller

**Response to Comment N-18565:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18566**

Comment ID: N-18566  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Kittelmann  
9801 Culpas Lane  
Richmond, VA 23236

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Chad Kittelmann

**Response to Comment N-18566:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18567**

Comment ID: N-18567  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Brandon Lowry  
3639 Argyle Ave  
Clovis, CA 93612

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Thousands of families travel to Johnson Valley to spend time together. In these times family orientation needs to be carefully considered. Children who participate in family activities like off-roading are less likely to join gangs or commit petty crimes for fun.

Sincerely,

Brandon Lowry

**Response to Comment N-18567:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18568**

Comment ID: N-18568  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Brandon Lowry  
3639 Argyle Ave  
Clovis, CA 93612

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Brandon Lowry

**Response to Comment N-18568:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18569**

Comment ID: N-18569  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Rhyland Schechter  
1521 Todos Santos Place  
Fallbrook, CA 92028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Rhyland Schechter

**Response to Comment N-18569:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18570**

Comment ID: N-18570  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jonathan Terhune  
5001 N Isabella LN  
Muncie, IN 47304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Terhune

**Response to Comment N-18570:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18571**

Comment ID: N-18571  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Gill  
9134 Bronco Dr  
Houston, TX 77055

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,  
David Gill

**Response to Comment N-18571:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18572**

Comment ID: N-18572  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Adam Jacob  
711 Meadow Wood Drive  
#10  
Crescent Springs, KY 41017

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,  
Adam Jacob

**Response to Comment N-18572:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18573**

Comment ID: N-18573  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler DeSpain  
2955 Dacey Place  
Bellevue, NE 68123

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Tyler DeSpain

**Response to Comment N-18573:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18574**

Comment ID: N-18574  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dustin Braaten  
29620 NE 60th St  
Camas, WA 98607

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

People travel from all over the country to enjoy the Johnson Valley OHV area. It's many families' annual vacation destination. They can enjoy their four wheel drive vehicles, ATV's, and motorcycles all in one area. There's also several generations using the area. The kids of the 90's are now bringing their children out to the area, and teaching them how to ride a motorcycle. Johnson Valley is a family friendly recreational area. Don't let the USMC take that away from the people.

Sincerely,

Dustin Braaten

**Response to Comment N-18574:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18575**

Comment ID: N-18575  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jeremy Ford  
203 Cadillac St  
Kannapolis, NC 28083

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Jeremy Ford

**Response to Comment N-18575:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18576**

Comment ID: N-18576  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andrew Salazar  
324 adobe st  
Lake elsinore, CA 92530

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Andrew Salazar

**Response to Comment N-18576:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18577**

Comment ID: N-18577  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan Hickox  
8643 North Clendenning Crk. Rd.  
Painted Post, NY 14870

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Dan Hickox

**Response to Comment N-18577:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18578**

Comment ID: N-18578  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Andre Desilet  
805 Amelia Circle  
Fernandina Beach, FL 32034

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Andre Desilet

**Response to Comment N-18578:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18579**

Comment ID: N-18579  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Dawn Buhmaster  
525 Center St  
Mt Pleasant, SC 29464

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Johnson Valley has been a wonderful chance for our family to share weeks of quality time over the last few years. We have traveled from South Carolina with our girls (age 3,4) and the cross country and camping experience is something they now look forward to for months at a time. Please don't take this opportunity away!  
Thank you for your consideration.  
D

Sincerely,

Dawn Buhmaster

**Response to Comment N-18579:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18580**

Comment ID: N-18580  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jack Ebert  
5401 Olivine Ct.  
Las Vegas, NV 89130

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Jack Ebert

**Response to Comment N-18580:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18581**

Comment ID: N-18581  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Ms. Mackenzie DeJarnett  
916 W Southgate ave  
Fullerton, CA 92832

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Mackenzie DeJarnett

**Response to Comment N-18581:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18582**

Comment ID: N-18582  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. gary battles  
835 e. country view circle  
fresno, CA 93730

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,  
gary battles

**Response to Comment N-18582:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18583**

Comment ID: N-18583  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Paul Hoffman  
6709 Walnut Ave  
Orangevale, CA 95662

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games. Please do not take this OHV area away from the people that value it the most.

Sincerely,

Paul Hoffman

**Response to Comment N-18583:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18584**

Comment ID: N-18584  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Harlan  
12012 Wintercrest Dr  
Lakeside, CA 92040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Thomas Harlan

**Response to Comment N-18584:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18585**

Comment ID: N-18585  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Barnett  
3269 Roswell Rd.  
Atlanta, GA 30319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games. The closeness and bonding that can take place while spending time in the great outdoors cannot be matched. Keep these lands open.

Sincerely,

Matt Barnett

**Response to Comment N-18585:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18586**

Comment ID: N-18586  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matthew Andino  
po box 1854  
goleta, CA 93116

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

Matthew Andino

**Response to Comment N-18586:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18587**

Comment ID: N-18587  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John Williams  
815 Red Rock #10  
Saint George, UT 84770

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

Sincerely,

John Williams

**Response to Comment N-18587:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18588**

Comment ID: N-18588  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Chad Proctor  
452 Laguna Dr.  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Johnson Valley has been a recreational area since it opened in the early 80's. Generations of families have come to Johnson Valley to spend time together doing the things that they love - OHV users, hikers, rock hounds, the film industry, bird watchers, campers, picnickers, explorers, etc. All of these activities as well as those that go with them such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be ended by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games.

I understand the need for training for our US military and have the utmost respect and support for our Armed Forces. However, I feel that there are other areas that could be utilized for training that will not have such a great impact as the impact on the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area.

Sincerely,

Chad Proctor

**Response to Comment N-18588:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18589**

Comment ID: N-18589  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Thomas Corbett  
33 McCall Place  
Newburgh, NY 12550

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Many generations of families have recreated in Johnson Valley since it opened in the early 80's. In a time when many families do not "connect" as well as they used to, Johnson Valley is a "family orientated" area that is used by many people to reconnect and get away from urban sprawl, cell phones, televisions and video games. This provides an ideal situation for families to bond and spend time together.

Sincerely,

Thomas Corbett

**Response to Comment N-18589:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18590**

Comment ID: N-18590  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bryan Coleman  
12051 N Pointe Ln  
Apt 4  
Holland, MI 49424

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area. If they wanted to see a crushed up war zone they would go overseas!

Sincerely,

Bryan Coleman

**Response to Comment N-18590:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18591**

Comment ID: N-18591  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Michael Maskalans  
Fingerlakes 4x4  
140 Norman Road  
Rochester, NY 14623

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Michael Maskalans

**Response to Comment N-18591:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18592**

Comment ID: N-18592  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Former Marines are opposed to this expansion!

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18592:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18593**

Comment ID: N-18593  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Ms. Karen Mosty  
821 Wheless Avenue  
Kerville, TX 78028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Karen Mosty

**Response to Comment N-18593:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18594**

Comment ID: N-18594  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jeff Carpenter  
2701 Buena Vista St.  
Bakersfield, CA 93304

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,  
Jeff Carpenter

**Response to Comment N-18594:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18595**

Comment ID: N-18595  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. David Elliott  
1117 43rd ave Apt 1  
sacramento, CA 95822

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

David Elliott

**Response to Comment N-18595:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18596**

Comment ID: N-18596  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Mike Crain  
471 S Hilton  
Apache Junction, AZ 85119

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Mike Crain

**Response to Comment N-18596:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18597**

Comment ID: N-18597  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th place  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The OHV area called JV is very important to the off road community. The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18597:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18598**

Comment ID: N-18598  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. James Leach  
13931 e old us 12  
Chelsea, MI 48118

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

James Leach

**Response to Comment N-18598:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18599**

Comment ID: N-18599  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Sam Visger  
6407 Bancroft Way  
San Jose, CA 95129-3903

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area. And if nobody is allowed to enjoy the area, the beauty will be wasted.

Sincerely,

Sam Visger

**Response to Comment N-18599:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18600**

Comment ID: N-18600  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. timothy connors jr  
29 gagnon rd  
lowell, MA 01854

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

timothy connors jr

**Response to Comment N-18600:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18601**

Comment ID: N-18601  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bach Wilson  
504 Reedy Fork Rd  
Piedmont, SC 29673

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Bach Wilson

**Response to Comment N-18601:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18602**

Comment ID: N-18602  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan McClure  
3465 n etheridge dr  
prescott valley, AZ 86314-4785

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Off roading is a hobby for many americans that allows them to get out and enjoy nature and keep fit. The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Dan McClure

**Response to Comment N-18602:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18603**

Comment ID: N-18603  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jason Williams  
79300 bowden Dr  
bermuda dunes, CA 92203

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Jason Williams

**Response to Comment N-18603:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18604**

Comment ID: N-18604  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matthew Blain  
21 Onondaga Street  
Springfield, MA 01128

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area. To take an area that is enjoyed for its beauty and transform it into a military base expansion is to make an impact that is irreversible. If the decision is made to expand the base, the beauty that this area is known for will be gone forever.

Sincerely,

Matthew Blain

**Response to Comment N-18604:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18605**

Comment ID: N-18605  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

As a former Marine, I would ask that you take into consideration the long term effects this will have on the community and Marines stationed at 29 Palms. Once the base has been expanded, it's very difficult if not impossible to reopen it to the public. Expanding East would allow the same training improvements without affecting the public or your Marines personal lives.

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18605:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18606**

Comment ID: N-18606  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Joanne Gray  
17552 triple crown loop  
gainsville , VA 20175-4548

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Offroading is a positive activity that promotes out doors healty activity as well as the study of engineering and math. The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Joanne Gray

**Response to Comment N-18606:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18607 (Page 1 of 2)**

Comment ID: N-18607  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 3 24th place  
Yuma , AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

JV is a very important area to many from all around the world. It would be a large loss not only to the OHV community but the entire population if it is shut down to the public. Currently the Marines find many of the general public wandering accidentally into 29 Palms. This number would greatly increase if 29 Palms expands into an area that has long been open to the public. Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. It is the Mecca of off-roading that people from all over the world travel to in order to experience it. The USMC does not realize the importance of this area to our community and OHV "Culture." With massive amounts of military vehicles, many of them tracked vehicles; the dust from military maneuvers will greatly affect the air quality in the area. While the documents say that water trucks will be used to suppress dust, it is impossible to water down the entire Johnson Valley. With all the dry vegetation in Johnson Valley and the use of live fire rounds, the possibility of a fire raging out of control in Johnson Valley will be greatly increased. The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,  
Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18607 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

It is acknowledged that the proposed training exercises will generate substantial amounts of fugitive dust, as shown in the EIS tables that present estimations of air emissions for each project alternative. The EIS dispersion modeling analyses determined that fugitive dust emissions would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the national ambient air quality standard for PM10. The EIS only proposes to control fugitive dust emissions from proposed construction activities, as it would be infeasible to control fugitive dust generated from the proposed training exercises.

**Comment ID: N-18607 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18607 (Page 2 of 2):**

As described in Section 4.4 of the EIS, the environment within the acquisition study areas is similar to that of the existing Combat Center, where wildland fires have not posed a substantial problem due to infrequent occurrence, timely emergency response, low levels of fuel, and strict use of Best Management Practices. Existing emergency response procedures would be applied to acquired land areas. In addition, current procedures for fire management and response contained in the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan would be extended to any acquired lands.

The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18608**

Comment ID: N-18608  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Richard Wilson  
6880 Westaway Drive  
Troy, MI 48085

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. These same users generally practice Leave No Trace to preserve the natural beauty of these same areas.

Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area. These same training exercises using live fire will also render the area unsafe for the public to enjoy the natural beauty of Johnson Valley.

With the utmost respect for our fine Marine Corp, I would like to suggest they seriously consider Alternative A which would take them to the East.

Sincerely,

Richard Wilson

**Response to Comment N-18608:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18609**

Comment ID: N-18609  
Date Received: May 26, 2011

Mr. Michael Stewart  
44509 Watford ave  
Lancaster, CA 93535

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Please take all these letters for more than there face value there is hard working people behind each one and this is extremely important to us. Going East just makes more sence.

Sincerely,

Michael Stewart

**Response to Comment N-18609:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18610**

Comment ID: N-18610  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Don Valdez  
7418 monique pl  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Don Valdez

**Response to Comment N-18610:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18611**

Comment ID: N-18611  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. tyler gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

tyler gowans

**Response to Comment N-18611:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18612**

Comment ID: N-18612  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bo Hatfield  
1505 River Creek Crescent  
Suffolk, VA 23434

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area. This is not how I want to picture more of our country.

Sincerely,

Bo Hatfield

**Response to Comment N-18612:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18613**

Comment ID: N-18613  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Don Valdez  
7418 monique pl  
Rohnert Park, CA 94928

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,  
Don Valdez

**Response to Comment N-18613:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18614**

Comment ID: N-18614  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Ehsan Kiani  
Twenty-nine Palms, CA  
Palms, CA 92277

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Ehsan Kiani

**Response to Comment N-18614:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18615**

Comment ID: N-18615  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Shaun Bootsma  
97 rainsville rd  
petaluma, CA 94952

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Shaun Bootsma

**Response to Comment N-18615:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18616**

Comment ID: N-18616  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Christopher Barcena  
6342 Poppyfield Street  
Gilroy, CA 95020

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Christopher Barcena

**Response to Comment N-18616:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18617**

Comment ID: N-18617  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Caskey  
848 flora st  
Prescott, AZ 86301-7532

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

I love to off road, it is one of the most positive things i have in my life and a great way for my son and i to bond. with out JV i lose a great spot to enjoy the out doors and my family. The beauty of Johnson Valley is one reason thousands of OHV enthusiasts flock to the area every year. Military operations, including the dropping of shells and the like, will distract from the natural beauty of the area.

Sincerely,

Matt Caskey

**Response to Comment N-18617:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected.

**Comment ID: N-18618**

Comment ID: N-18618  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. timothy connors jr  
. 29 gagnon rd  
lowell, MA 01854

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

timothy connors jr

**Response to Comment N-18618:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18619**

Comment ID: N-18619  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Michael Maskalans  
Fingerlakes 4x4  
140 Norman Road  
Rochester, NY 14623

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Michael Maskalans

**Response to Comment N-18619:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18620**

Comment ID: N-18620  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

As a former Marine please take the time to consider all of your options before expanding into Johnson Valley. It should be your last choice only if NONE of the other alternatives are possible. If there is a cost savings in expanding West, consider the loss of income and negative economic impact and realize that there is no real savings in going West. Any additional cost or effort to expand other than West would be in the best interest of everyone involved. I want to believe that the administration would encourage alternatives that would retain the popular support of my Corps by the public!

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18620:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18621**

Comment ID: N-18621  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Mike Crain  
471 S Hilton  
Apache Junction, AZ 85119

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,  
Mike Crain

**Response to Comment N-18621:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18622**

Comment ID: N-18622  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Sam Visger  
6407 Bancroft Way  
San Jose, CA 95129-3903

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,  
Sam Visger

**Response to Comment N-18622:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18623**

Comment ID: N-18623  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan McClune  
3465 n etheridge dr  
prescott valley, AZ 86314-4785

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Off roading is a hobby for many americans that allows them to get out and enjoy nature and keep fit. Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS. Off roading is a hobby for many americans that allows them to get out and enjoy nature and keep fit.

Sincerely,

Dan McClune

**Response to Comment N-18623:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18624**

Comment ID: N-18624  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bach Wilson  
504 Reedy Fork Rd  
Piedmont, SC 29673

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS, safety should NEVER be overlooked.

Sincerely,

Bach Wilson

**Response to Comment N-18624:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18625**

Comment ID: N-18625  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jason Williams  
79300 bowden Dr  
bermuda dunes, CA 92203

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Jason Williams

**Response to Comment N-18625:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18626**

Comment ID: N-18626  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

As a former Marine, I would ask that you take into consideration the long term effects this will have on the community and Marines stationed at 29 Palms. Once the base has been expanded, it's very difficult if not impossible to reopen it to the public. Expanding East would allow the same training improvements without affecting the public or your Marines personal lives.

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18626:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18627**

Comment ID: N-18627  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,  
Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18627:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18628**

Comment ID: N-18628  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matt Caskey  
848 flora st  
Prescott, AZ 86301-7532

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Matt Caskey

**Response to Comment N-18628:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18629**

Comment ID: N-18629  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mrs. Joanne Gray  
17552 triple crown loop  
gainsville, VA 20175-4548

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Offroading is a positive activity that promotes out doors healthy activity as well as the study of engineering and math. Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Joanne Gray

**Response to Comment N-18629:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18630**

Comment ID: N-18630  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Matthew Blain  
21 Onondaga Street  
Springfield, MA 01128

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS. Not only are the routes going to be damaged if this expansion takes place, but the environmental impact of such displacements of soil must be thoroughly understood if this expansion is to take place.

Sincerely,

Matthew Blain

**Response to Comment N-18630:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18631**

Comment ID: N-18631  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 3 24th place  
Yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

JV is a very important area to many from all around the world, it would be a large loss not only to the OHV community but the entire population if it is shut down to the public. Currently the Marines find many of the general public wandering accidentally into 29 Palms. This number would greatly increase if 29 Palms expands into an area that has long been open to the public. Johnson Valley Recreation area is NOT just a spot for people to go wheeling. Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18631:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18632**

Comment ID: N-18632  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. John smith  
1059 old bush river road  
chapin, SC 29036

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS. The damage done during military operations will remain forever and this takeover of the JV would change the landscape forever. The public has the right to this area, please dont tread on our rights.

Sincerely,  
John smith

**Response to Comment N-18632:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18633**

Comment ID: N-18633  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th pl  
Yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordnance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

tyler gowans

**Response to Comment N-18633:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18634**

Comment ID: N-18634  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. James Powell  
168 Beverly Dr  
Barnegat, NJ 08005

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

James Powell

**Response to Comment N-18634:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18635**

Comment ID: N-18635  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Ms. Karen Mosty  
821 Wheelless Avenue  
Kerrville, TX 78028

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Karen Mosty

**Response to Comment N-18635:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18636**

Comment ID: N-18636  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Shaun Bootsma  
97 rainsville rd  
petaluma, CA 94952

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,  
Shaun Bootsma

**Response to Comment N-18636:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18637**

Comment ID: N-18637  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Currently there are many "routes" in Johnson valley, along with many OHV trails. To this day, there are craters in the desert left over from training during WWII, many of which pose a danger to OHV enthusiasts. With Marines training in the area dropping ordinance, many of these routes will be damaged. This problem has not been addressed in the EIS.

Sincerely,

Christopher Barcena

Mr. Christopher Barcena  
6342 Poppyfield Street  
Gilroy, CA 95020

**Response to Comment N-18637:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 4.12 of the EIS, the same programs and procedures that apply to current training activities to avoid and minimize impacts to soils at the Combat Center (e.g., tank traps, foxholes, trenches, and obstacles would be filled and graded when training exercises are completed) would be extended to any lands acquired under the proposed action. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 to prepare the Restricted Public Access Area for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18638**

Comment ID: N-18638  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Former Marines are opposed to this expansion!

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordinance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,  
Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18638:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18639**

Comment ID: N-18639  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Michael Maskalans  
Fingerlakes 4x4  
140 Norman Road  
Rochester, NY 14623

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordnance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,  
Michael Maskalans

**Response to Comment N-18639:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18640**

Comment ID: N-18640  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Mike Crain  
471 S Hilton  
Apache Junction, AZ 85119

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordinance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,  
Mike Crain

**Response to Comment N-18640:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18641**

Comment ID: N-18641  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Tyler Gowans  
11302 e 24th place  
yuma, AZ 85367-3625

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordnance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

Tyler Gowans

**Response to Comment N-18641:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18642**

Comment ID: N-18642  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Sam Visger  
6407 Bancroft Way  
San Jose, CA 95129-3903

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordinance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use." Using OHV's in the area is much less detrimental to it.

Sincerely,  
Sam Visger

**Response to Comment N-18642:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18643**

Comment ID: N-18643  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. timothy connors jr  
29 gagnon rd  
lowell, MA 01854

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordnance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an Issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

timothy connors jr

**Response to Comment N-18643:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18644**

Comment ID: N-18644  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Bach Wilson  
504 Reedy Fork Rd  
Piedmont, SC 29673

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordnance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

Bach Wilson

**Response to Comment N-18644:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18645**

Comment ID: N-18645  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Dan McClune  
3465 n etheridge dr  
prescott valley, AZ 86314-4785

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Off roading is a hobby for many americans that allows them to get out and enjoy nature and keep fit. Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordinance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley un-usable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

Dan McClune

**Response to Comment N-18645:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18646**

Comment ID: N-18646  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Jason Williams  
79300 bowden Dr  
bermuda dunes, CA 92203

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordinance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

Jason Williams

**Response to Comment N-18646:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18647**

Comment ID: N-18647  
Date Received: May 25, 2011

Mr. Kyle Irvin  
601 W 145th Pl  
Glenpool, OK 74033

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

To Whom It May Concern:

As a former Marine, I would ask that you take into consideration the long term effects this will have on the community and Marines stationed at 29 Palms. Once the base has been expanded, it's very difficult if not impossible to reopen it to the public. Expanding East would allow the same training improvements without affecting the public or your Marines personal lives.

Even today, live shells are found occasionally in Johnson valley from training during WWII. With a large amount of ordnance being dropped in the area, the Marines may make Johnson Valley unusable for many years to come if it is ever re-released to the public. This is also an issue with "shared use."

Sincerely,

Kyle Irvin

**Response to Comment N-18647:**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18648 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18648  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Sophia Dougherty  
60545 Natoma Trail  
Joshua Tree CA 92252  
[sophiadougherty82@gmail.com](mailto:sophiadougherty82@gmail.com) 760-401-6500

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The Executive Summary on Page 4 explains why the USMC is proposing the establishment of a large-scale training facility at MCAGCC 29Palms. It says the Marine Corps has a requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Air Ground Task Force, and the existing facilities are inadequate.

The underlying strategy was designed over a decade ago. Times and technology have changed. It appears the very foundation for this strategy is changing.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/gates-time-has-come-to/>

Posted by SWJ Editors on August 13, 2010 4:01 AM

Gates Orders Marine Corps Force Structure Review by Jim Garamone of American Forces Press Service. An excerpt follows:

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered a thorough force structure review of the Marine Corps to determine what an expeditionary force in readiness should look like in the 21st century. There are questions about the mission of the Marine Corps, Gates said. Before World War II, the Marines very successfully conducted "small wars" in the western hemisphere. The service also developed the rationale and logistics needed to conduct amphibious warfare.

During World War II, the Corps was wholly dedicated to landing on the beaches in the South and Central Pacific. America's first offensive of World War II was when Marines landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal and began the campaign against Japan in August 1942. Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are just a few of the landings Marines made.

Since then, Marines have fought on the beaches, mountains and trenches of Korea, the highlands and rice paddies of Vietnam, and the deserts of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although many of these operations saw Marines initially projected from the sea, "they soon turned into long, grinding, ground engagements," Gates said.

The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time.

Also see: Gates: Time has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and Defense Chief Gates Orders Review of Marines' Role by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times.

A more recent article dated Mar. 2, 2011, says that Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, spoke to news media about the 2010 Force Structure Review (formed to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of the Marine Corps and its role within the joint force in a fiscally-restrained post-Afghanistan environment; and I quote). Two of the recommendations from the Review are:

Response to Comment N-18648 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18648 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18648 (Page 2 of 2):

A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,900 when conditions in Afghanistan warrant, and Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental headquarters from eight to seven; infantry battalions from 27-24); a reduction in cannon artillery battalions (nine to seven; but a reorganization of batteries to support distributed operations), and a reduction in armor (10 companies to 8).  
See more at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/Pages/RestoringBalanceinMarineCorps.aspx>

The Force Structure Review of 2010 itself is attached. Its objectives do not jibe with the objectives stated for the MCAGCC expansion.

The very foundation for this Draft Environmental Impact Study is outdated. Page 4 even says that the training requirement is drawn from an earlier Marine Strategy 21 for 2000. Page 77 Land Use Requirements Study was completed in July of 2005 and based on the earlier training requirements.

On Page 78 it is stated:

1. that MEB-size training is declared (in 2008) by the Marine Corps to be an enduring requirement
2. therefore existing land and air space is insufficient,
3. therefore land acquisition is necessary

Any study of military history shows the last thing any fighting force needs is an enduring requirement. Otherwise, we would still have muzzleloaders, horse-drawn caissons or Sherman tanks. Therefore the judgement that MEB-sized training is required is flawed. Therefore the judgement that existing land and air space is insufficient is called into question. Therefore the judgement that land acquisition is necessary is flawed.

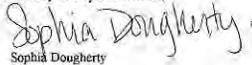
Because the Marines state they must train as they fight, it does not mean they are not already doing so, or that they cannot make quick judgements based on today's conditions for training requirements for tomorrow. Because so much time has been put into this outdated plan does not mean it must roll downhill without taking another look.

The document must be reviewed and anywhere outdated requirements are defined for MEB-sized training, and the existing facilities are declared inadequate, they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere ideal range requirements are mentioned they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere airspace requirements are defined they must be justified to today's needs.

The statement on Page 192 that the No-Action Alternative would not meet the needs for the proposed action must be reconsidered in this light also.

Otherwise the entire document must be discarded as it is based on outdated decisions and information.

Thank you for your attention.



Sophia Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18649 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18649  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Sophia Dougherty  
60545 Natoma Trail  
Joshua Tree Ca 92252  
Sophiadougherty82@gmail.com 760-401-6500

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion.

Dear Sir,

The DEIS states:  
Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

3.11 Cultural Resources: The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:

Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgments are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.

It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
  - Devaluation of surrounding private property.
  - Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement
- All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries.

Response to Comment N-18649 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley. Furthermore, Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS has been updated as appropriate to address issues related to the Small Homestead Act.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

If one of the proposed alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Comment ID: N-18649 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18649 (Page 2 of 3):

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage.

"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of

Comment ID: N-18649 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18649 (Page 3 of 3):

spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision.”  
-Desert Magazine 1944

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves. The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant.  
<http://www.coutant.org/mininternet/saga/index.html>

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

Thank You



Sophia Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18650 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18650  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Sophia Dougherty  
60543 Natoma Trail, Joshua Tree, CA  
sophiadougherty82@gmail.com  
(760)401-6300

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The communities of Landers and Johnson Valley are in Postal Zip Code 92285.

Landers borders the existing Marine Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms; Johnson Valley is directly southwest of it, and due south of the proposed westward expansion area.

Environmental Justice provisions are addressed in the DEIS because Federal Projects are not supposed to have disproportionate impacts against any ethnic, demographic or socio-economic group.

IN POSTAL CODE 92285, CENSUS 2010 HAS STATED:

- The population is 2,181.
  - The median age of the population is 49.5. 24.7% are 65 years and over. This is almost twice the percentage of people 65 and older in the US population (12.4%). These are very much senior citizen communities.
  - Many residents are retired and on fixed incomes. 39% of our population 16 and over is in the labor force, as compared to 69% in the US.
  - Families below poverty level: 20.8% In the US: 12.4%
  - Individuals below poverty level: 24.9% In the US: 12.4%
  - Disability status (population 5 years and over): 34.8% In the US: 19.3%
- And for good measure:
- Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over): 25.1% In the US 12.7% (and we know many are proud Marines)

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAPFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&geoContext=&street=&county=92285&cityTown=92285&state=&zip=92285&lang=en&ssc=on&pxct=fpb&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAPFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&geoContext=&street=&county=92285&cityTown=92285&state=&zip=92285&lang=en&ssc=on&pxct=fpb&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y)

The factors listed above indicate the project does raise issues of Environmental Justice for the residents of Landers and Johnson Valley.

The DEIS states that EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice say there must be one or more such affected populations within the DEIS area (Page 533). However, very few live WITHIN the EIS area, and it is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents outside the EIS area will not be impacted. The scoping issues (Item 4.3.1.3) listed on the same page include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
- Devaluation of surrounding private property.
- Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.

Response to Comment N-18650 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and low-income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. All environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

Comment ID: N-18650 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18650 (Page 2 of 3):

The contradiction is the DEIS states that the primary economic impacts would be from displacement of certain activities within the DEIS area causing financial and other hardships to surrounding areas. Therefore the DEIS must be revised to state the criteria for judging Environmental Justice are too narrow, and must state that these criteria also apply to populations outside the DEIS area. Anything less would be easily misunderstood by a less-than-careful reader. Landers and Johnson Valley are within the impact area of the DEIS because of activities that are associated with current activities emanating from the Marine Base, and proposed activities due to the expansion, are above, around and adjacent to Landers and Johnson Valley. To assert otherwise is disingenuous and misleading.

The statement on Page 537 that increase of jobs on the Base would offset jobs lost in the area is self-serving and must be modified, as it does not address the fact that our employed and employable population are outside the 30-minute commute time discussed. Their ability to handle the costs of a longer must be included in the DEIS. The 30-minute commute time is impossible to determine, given traffic and road conditions vary widely throughout the area. The Marines' establishment of the 30-minute commute time is arbitrary.

Landers and Johnson Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

The fact that Landers and other communities have co-existed with the Base for decades is not germane to the discussion. Modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact.

In my personal judgement, most of the residents near the Base and expansion areas are patriots, who support the Marines' dedication to excellent training of the forces who are willing to be sent out to fight where we no longer can or maybe never could. But the nature of Environmental Justice is a direct outgrowth of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that they fight to uphold. The DEIS must take a second look at the Base neighbors and their dilemma.

The DEIS judgement is based on estimates and assumptions, therefore I may be allowed to assume that other neighboring communities will be impacted the same as Landers and Johnson Valley.

Therefore, the DEIS conclusion under Item 4.3.2.5 and others must be changed and it must be stated for every Alternative action in the document. Certain socio-economic groups, including, but not limited to, seniors, retirees on fixed incomes, families and individuals below the poverty level, the disabled, and veterans residing in neighboring communities in percentages far greater than in the nation at large, will bear a disproportionate burden if the planned training and area expansions are put into place.

THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT, The EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice must be added to and expanded to include populations outside the DEIS area, and that citing EO 12898 alone caused a potentially misleading contradiction in the draft document. It also must state, for each Alternative, that significant impacts will occur with respect to Environmental Justice.

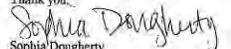
The DEIS must state what steps have been taken in previous actions at other Bases to insure equity and

Comment ID: N-18650 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18650 (Page 3 of 3):

fairness in regards to Environmental Justice. The repeated assertion in this DEIS that mitigation is not possible means nothing can be done to insure equity and fairness, and the DEIS must state that fact prominently, and state the draft document had omitted it.

Thank you,

  
Sophia Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18651

Comment ID: N-18651  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: LUCERNE VALLEY DATE: 26 MAY 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise           | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I WAS STATIONED IN 29 PALMS FOR 2 1/2 YEARS WITH 4 BATT. 11<sup>th</sup> MARINES. I KNOW WHAT IT IS LIKE TO LIVE NEAR WAR GAMES.  
I MOVED TO LUCERNE VALLEY TO GET AWAY FROM CITY LIFE, AND I ENJOY THE PEACE AND QUIET IT PROVIDES. IF THE BASE EXPANDS I KNOW THAT WILL ALL END. JUST HOW MANY JETS, HELICOPTERS AND BOMBS WILL THERE BE ONLY A FEW MILES FROM MY HOUSE? MORE THAN I'LL LIKE, I'M SURE.  
PLEASE DON'T TAKE OVER JOHNSON VALLEY. I LIKE WHERE I LIVE, THE WAY IT IS.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18651:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18652 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18652  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: WONDER VALLEY SOUTH STUDY AREA/EAST STUDY AREA DATE: MAY 24, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

SEE ATTACHED

---

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: THERESA LANGLOIS

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: PO BOX 178, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CA 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18652 (Page 1 of 2):

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The EIS has been revised accordingly. Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information. Noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel. Discussion is included throughout the EIS noting the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for the desert tortoise and other wildlife species (see Section 4.10). While the relative importance of various factors in the decline of the desert tortoise are still uncertain and the EIS states this, the published literature that is available indicates that OHVs do adversely affect tortoises via habitat degradation and direct impacts (one such review is Ouren et al. 2007). Analysis of existing disturbance in the west study area from OHVs indicated a significant correlation between areas of high OHV disturbance and lower desert tortoise densities (refer to Appendix I of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18652 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18652 (Page 2 of 2):

After attending a Public Meeting on the Draft EIS, April 12, 2011 at Joshua Tree, I took some time to study what was presented and listen to comments from in and outside the Wonder Valley Community.

The Wonder Valley Community is supportive of Marines and the Military as a whole. The need to prepare and train our Service men and women is important. Many in the Community are former and present Marines and Sailors. The need to protect our wilderness areas and wildlife is also important.

One area, South Study Area is adjacent to the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness Area. Quoted from an article in the Hi-Desert Publishing Co. Basin Wide Spirit Magazine, Summer 2010, "Thousands of acres of pristine desert surrounding two dry lakes." It has a canyon of Ghost Flowers (rare find in other areas of the desert), to 4,100 feet in the Bullion Mountains, the perfect habitat for bighorn sheep, in the Sheephole Pass area. Bighorn sheep have been seen in the Pass area, though I have yet to be fortunate to see one. In addition at the lower elevations there are Desert Tortoises and many things not yet discovered in this pristine preserve.

Even if the South Study Area is used for staging, the vibrations from large/heavy trucks, very bright lights at night, noise to name a few will effect the wildlife. The burrows and introduction of exhausts fumes will start to change this beautiful area.

On the East Study Area, of course the bighorn sheep in Sheephole Pass has been mentioned. Amboy Road is regularly used to access areas to the north/east of Wonder Valley (ex: McCarran Airport-Las Vegas). And for the people coming from the north and east to Wonder Valley, to areas in the High/Low Deserts and beyond. That question was asked about Amboy Road closure. Reply: Amboy Road would be blocked on both ends, signs would be put up to notify people of the closed road. My question is: Where would you start? People come from as far west as Interstate 10 and on the east Arizona and Nevada. When the traffic starts to stack up, what then? What would happen in 100 plus degree temperatures, radiators may overflow, car may run out of gas and road shoulders have signs of being soft sand? Health and safety should be a major concern!

Comment ID: N-18653

Comment ID: N-18653  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 The Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley DATE: 5-23-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety              | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I am writing out of concern of the U.S. Marine Corps base expansion into most of the Johnson Valley. While I usually support the U.S. Marine Corps, I do not support this expansion effort to the west. I do support the base expanding its territory to the east.

This expansion into the Johnson Valley puts war games and similar activities within earshot of the Lucerne Valley where I live. In fact, my home sits on a hill with a direct view of the Johnson Valley. I can just imagine our calm and hushed high desert valley being rocked with canon fire, air/ground assaults and the like. Many of us who retired here did so because of the clean air, healthful desert environment, and solitude.

I'm confident that war games will also occur at night which is even more worrisome. We didn't move here to have our evenings saturated with explosions and Afghanistan-like military maneuverings.

I fear expansion of the base into the Johnson Valley will also have a negative economic impact on our businesses, especially our supermarket. Many off-road fans stock up on supplies at our market as they head east for recreational activities in the area the Marine Corps hopes to annex. They also stop at our restaurants and gas stations. If the Marines occupy most of the Johnson Valley thus preventing off-roaders from heading here, it will dry up this vital source of income to our already suffering local economy.

Please head east, not west.

- NAME: THOMAS A. WOODS
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 31420 RABBIT SPRINGS LANE  
LUCERNE VALLEY, CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18653:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18654 (Page 1 of 5)

Comment ID: N-18654  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps 1  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: ONTARIO DATE: 5-20-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |

ALTERNATIVE 6 DOES NOT PRESERVE IMPORTANT RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE COMMUNITY. IN FACT IT ELIMINATES 90% OF THEM. IN ADDITION IT DOES NOT PROVIDE MITIGATION FOR THE LOSS OF OVER 140,000 ACRES OF OPEN OHV AREA THAT THE BLM ITSELF DESCRIBES AS WORLD CLASS. EIS FAILED TO ADEQUATELY ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE OHV COMMUNITY AND AS U.S. MARINES REP MR. CHRIS PROOFSTADT STATED THE OHVERS ARE GETTING SCREENED. EIS FAILED TO AND NEED TO STUDY POSSIBLE ALTERNATION OF GASLINE TO THE NORTH TO MINIMIZE WEST EXPANSION AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE SINCE RELOCATION COSTS EVEN IF

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\* (CONTINUED) 1 of 4

- NAME: Jim Nowak
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): Nowak Family
- ADDRESS: 21275 VIA TOMAS YORBA LINDA CA 92887

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18654 (Page 1 of 5):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18654 (Page 2 of 5)

(2)

AS MUCH AS 10 MILLION DOLLARS OR MORE AS STATED ARE CHEAP AS COMPARED TO THE ECONOMIC IMPACT THE LOSS OF JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA WOULD HAVE ON THE COMMUNITIES AROUND IT IMMEDIATELY AND FOR YEARS TO COME.

EIS FAILED TO STUDY AND NEEDS TO STUDY EASTWARD EXPANSION INTO THE NORTHERN TIP OF THE WILDERNESS AREA AS THIS AREA CONTAINS SIMILAR QUALITIES AS THOSE THE MARINES HAVE STATED THEY NEED TO CONDUCT TRAINING, EVEN IF ALL THE AREA THE MARINES REQUESTED CANNOT BE OBTAINED GOING EAST AND OR NORTH THE EIS FAILED TO COMBINE AND STUDY AREAS TO MINIMIZE WESTWARD EXPANSION.

PUBLIC MEETINGS FAILED TO PROVIDE MAPS TO TAKE SO THAT THE PUBLIC COULD REPLY STUDY THE ALTERNATIVES, ONLY FIXED DISPLAYS WERE PROVIDED.

IT IS UNREALISTIC THAT THE MARINES WOULD BE ABLE TO SHARE USE OF CERTAIN AREAS AS STATED IN ALTERNATIVE 6 SINCE ANY INSTANCE OF UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE THAT COULD HAVE STRAYED

Response to Comment N-18654 (Page 2 of 5):

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Comment ID: N-18654 (Page 3 of 5)

(3)

INTO THESE COMMON USE AREAS WOULD CAUSE THEM TO BECOME OFF LIMITS TO THE PUBLIC.

DRAFT EIS FAILED TO STUDY POSSIBLE USE OF OTHER MILITARY BASES FOR EXERCISES SUCH AS FORT IRWIN.

THE MARINE CORPS IN SELECTING ALT. 6 HAVE NOT SELECTED THE BEST ALTERNATIVE AS DETERMINED BY THE SCOPING PERIOD, INSTEAD THEY ~~SO~~ CHOSE THE EASIEST.

JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA IS AN IRREPLACEABLE PUBLIC TREASURE AND THE EFFECTS ON THE ECONOMY AND THE ENVIRONMENT BY DISPLACING THE HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF DIVERSE USERS IF ALTERNATIVE 6 WERE TO BE IMPLEMENTED WOULD BE DEVASTATING FOR YEARS TO COME, THEREFORE ALTERNATIVE 1, NO ACTION, OR ALTERNATIVE 3, OR FURTHER STUDY ARE THE ONLY VIABLE OPTIONS

EIS DID NOT STUDY THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT THAT DISPLACED OHV USE ON OTHER AREAS INCLUDING LEGAL AND ILLEGAL LAND USE SINCE MOST ALTERNATIVES

Response to Comment N-18654 (Page 3 of 5):

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18654 (Page 4 of 5)

(4)

INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE 6 WOULD  
CLOSE THE LARGEST OPEN AREA IN  
CALIFORNIA WHICH HAS NO ALTERNATE  
AREA TO RELOCATE TO. SAFETY OF  
USER GROUPS HAS BEEN FAILED TO  
BE ADDRESSED AS THEY ARE DISPLACED  
BY ALTERNATIVE 6, LEADING TO OVERCROWDING  
AND PRESSURE OF FEWER AVAILABLE  
RECREATION ACRES.

THANK YOU,

TIM NOWAK AND FAMILY

LIZZ NOWAK  
SYDNEY NOWAK  
TRAVIS NOWAK  
SAM NOWAK SR.  
MARY SUE NOWAK  
MARIL NOWAK  
SAM NOWAK JR.  
DANIEL NOWAK  
MELISSA NOWAK

Response to Comment N-18654 (Page 4 of 5):

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Comment ID: N-18654 (Page 5 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18654 (Page 5 of 5):



Comment ID: N-18655

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18655  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 8 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are North Anderson, Cougar Butte where we engage in such activities as Camping, hiking, OHV. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$150 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$150 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: Letty's Restaurant, Farmer boys, Arcu Co's Grocery store

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name Tony Nard  
Address 2176 Carden Ave  
Simi Valley, Ca 93065  
Date 5-20-11

Response to Comment N-18655:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18656 (Page 1 of 2)

ARRA  
Americans for Responsible Recreational Access

From: Arra-Access <webmaster@arra-access.com>  
To: Inardi500 <inardi500@aol.com>  
Subject: Comment on the Potential Closure of Johnson Valley  
Date: Fri, May 20, 2011 1:01 pm

Comment ID: N-18656  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**All DEIS Alternatives Would Restrict Access**

As you have no doubt heard by now, the United States Marines are seeking to establish a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California. To this end a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been released. Comments will be accepted until Thursday, May 26<sup>th</sup>.

The DEIS analyzes 6 alternatives for potential impacts to land use, recreation, public health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, water resources and other resources. The preferred alternative is alternative 6.

The DEIS can be viewed [here](#).

Unfortunately, any of the proposed alternatives, including the Marines' preferred alternative, will ultimately result in the loss of OHV access and possibly a complete closure of the Johnson Valley OHV area.

Please review the DEIS and submit comments by filling in the attached webform found [here](#). You can cut-and-paste the following or insert your own comments. Either way it is imperative that you weigh in before the comment period closes on May 26!

**Suggested Comments:**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training*. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action "...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need..." However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists.

I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

ARRA  
Americans for Responsible Recreational Access

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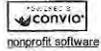
Response to Comment N-18656 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18656 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18656 (Page 2 of 2):

1152 15th Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, DC 20005  
webmaster@eara-access.com  
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To Marine base,

Using Johnson Valley for base expansion would wipe out the largest OHV area in the nation. Offroaders & miners & hunters & hikers oppose the expansion of the base.

I support the "No action" alternative, or

This is terrible, why doesn't the base expand east, away from land that already being used.

Jerry Nardh  
2176 Corders Ave  
Simi Valley, Ca  
93065

**Comment ID: N-18657**

Comment ID: N-18657  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground, Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible.

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

  
Tanya L. Wilson  
56610 Hidden Gold Dr.  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

**Response to Comment N-18657:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18658 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18658  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
Attn: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190

From: Almut R. Fleck  
P O Box 440  
29 Palms, CA 92277



Re: Comments on the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Draft EIS

Date: May 25, 2011

The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Base will have negative impacts on the environment, on animal habitat, and on private property. The preferred option is an expansion into Johnson Valley and Wonder Valley as the sites for the coordinated 72-hr, twice a year training exercises with live ammunition. In addition to training our service members, those of foreign countries will be trained here as well. No matter which area of those under consideration will be chosen for the expansion, the impact will be detrimental.

I am not satisfied with the DEIS in its scope and lack of specifics, especially its limited and vague discussion of mitigation measures. As a property owner and concerned resident I oppose any expansion at this time that will result in destruction of private and BLM lands, of flood infrastructures, of delicate ecosystems, etc., result in increased air pollution, increased noise, and increased tension between residents and illegal off road vehicle (ORV) riders. The burden of the associated costs of the above needs to be assessed realistically and must be guaranteed for any mitigating measures to be effective.

NEPA-1

As property owners we have had plenty of experience with illegal ORV activities, the threats, harassment, and deliberate destruction as retaliation for reporting the illegal activities to the authorities. Displaced ORV riders will increase their incursions into, and their destruction of, individual properties and our communities, especially when enforcement is lacking as right now.

REC-1

The DEIS does not address these issues adequately, there are assumptions vs. facts, mitigating measures are insufficient and should be discussed with affected community members and organizations. Communities are already impacted by air and noise pollution and windows rattling and houses shaking; by expanding the base into our communities, there will be a dramatic increase in all of these.

In addition, I am deeply concerned about the health of the desert communities. The High Desert in general and especially 29 Palms used to be known for its peacefulness and good air quality; people would come from all over to be treated for lung disease and other war-related illnesses. Now there is a risk in the desert communities, including those living on base and training in an environment (sand dust) similar to current war zones. Just as the illegal ORV activities destroy vegetation, animal habitat, flood infrastructures, increase air pollution, and raise noise levels, so will the expansion of the base and the increased training of our service people as well as those from other countries who will train here.

AQ-1

Of course, training is necessary in order to be effective in combat and to increase the chances of survival; however, combat training itself can make our service members (and the civil population)

Response to Comment N-18658 (Page 1 of 3):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The types of impacts noted in your comment are discussed in the EIS, and all impact analyses have been based on the best available data. Where data were not available, assumptions were made to inform the analysis, and all such assumptions were clearly described in the EIS. The Marine Corps considered potential mitigation measures for each identified impact but in some cases determined that none were feasible for specific impacts. In some cases, additional text was added in the FEIS to clarify certain mitigations or the lack thereof, as well as to clarify the distinction between “special conservation measures” and “mitigations.”

REC-1:

Additional analysis of the likelihood and potential impacts of possible illegal ORV activity has been incorporated into Section 4.2 of the FEIS. The EIS also addresses impacts related to air and noise and vibrations associated with proposed training activities.

AQ-1:

The Combat Center initiated air monitoring for silica in 2008. Data collected at the Mainside and East SE stations showed that silica content in particulate samples ranged from 5 to 11 percent and that ambient 24-hour concentrations of silica ranged from 0.5 to 1.2 µg/m3.

The following is an approach that qualitatively estimates worst-case impacts to the public from silica generated by the proposed training exercises. The DEIS PM10 dispersion modeling analysis predicts

**Comment ID: N-18658 (Page 2 of 3)**

vulnerable to crystallized silica, dust that becomes respirable under certain condition. The seriousness of the health hazards associated with crystallized silica exposure is demonstrated by the fatalities and disabling illnesses recognized by OSHA. Crystallized silica has been classified as a human lung carcinogen. It can also cause silicosis when silica dust enters the lungs and forms scar tissue thus reducing the lungs' ability to take in oxygen. There is no cure at this time. It also makes people more susceptible to lung infections like tuberculosis.

Since crystallized silica cannot be coughed up and stays in the lungs, it is the cumulative effect that leads to serious health hazards, often not showing up for a long time. I would imagine that, in addition to our service members, young children and the elderly are most vulnerable to this health threat. Health care costs will rise. The increased air and noise pollution may also affect the tourist industry, an important economic factor in this area.

Let's proceed cautiously and gather more information about all of the effects of the proposed expansion, ensure that there is a budget for all mitigating measures for environmental damage and that health and safety of the residents is a priority as well as for our troops so we won't send them to fight with their health already compromised.

You will find, I'm sure, many people in our communities who are equally concerned and would gladly participate with time and ideas to work together toward the best solutions.

AQ-1

**Response to Comment N-18658 (Page 2 of 3):**

that the maximum 24-hour PM10 concentration generated by the proposed training exercises to public lands is 149 ug/m<sup>3</sup>.

The location of this maximum impact is predicted to be on the southwest boundary of the proposed West Area. Assuming these particles have a silica content of 11 percent and taking into consideration a conversion of this impact from a 24-hour to annual period concentration, the maximum annual silica concentration equates to 3.3 ug/m<sup>3</sup>. This result is extremely conservative, as wind directions over an annual period would be much more variable compared to the 24-hour period evaluated in the dispersion modeling analysis, which would produce more dispersion and therefore a lower annual concentration. In addition, due to the remoteness of the maximum PM10 impact location adjacent to the proposed West Area, no one would reside in this location for an entire year and therefore would experience an annual exposure to potential silica emissions generated from the proposed actions. Therefore, silica emissions generated by the proposed training exercises would produce less than significant impacts to the public. Since the dispersion modeling analysis predicted relatively low PM10 impacts to the Mainside portion of the Combat Center, this less than significant silica impact determination also would apply to civilians that reside in this area.

*De minimus* thresholds established by the EPA for particulate matter are health based standards. Since the proposed emissions are below the *de minimus* threshold, no significant impacts are expected. Since the project alternatives would not produce any significant air quality impacts, except the significant impact to ambient PM10

**Comment ID: N-18658 (Page 3 of 3)**

**Response to Comment N-18658 (Page 3 of 3):**

levels estimated for Alternative 3, the increased air pollution associated with the project alternatives would not be expected to significantly affect the tourism industry.

**Comment ID: N-18659**

Comment ID: N-18659  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Ben Cossart  
P. O. Box 2887, Fallbrook, California 92088-2887  
760 728-5300 - bendeb@rff.com

23 May 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29 Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir,

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley were all founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land with the stipulation the individual would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

These historical communities should be preserved, as they stand now, with no further impact from the 29 Palms Marine base from noise, vibration, air pollution and light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will do just that.

I urge you to take the base expansion to the east, which will eliminate the negative impacts on these historical communities.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Ben Cossart

**Response to Comment N-18659:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley. Furthermore, Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS has been updated as appropriate to address issues related to the Small Homestead Act.

**Comment ID: N-18660**

Comment ID: N-18660  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Betsy Shade, M.D.  
1762 Belle Court  
Millersville, MD 21108

May 16, 2011

NAVFAC Southwest  
Attn: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Dear Project Manager:

These comments are submitted for consideration on the Twentynine Palms base expansion Draft EIS. My six children (ages now 12 to 15) love wild country, and we all hope the magnificent lands of the California Desert will still be wild when they grow up and explore our beautiful land for themselves.

I do not have any preference among the alternatives, but I suggest one change to Alternative 6, which allows ORVs to continue riding in Johnson Valley when it is not in use for military training. This alternative should be strengthened by adding mitigation measures to protect the land against impacts from illegal ORVs. The Bureau of Land Management has found that illegal ORV riding has done serious damage to many areas of public lands. I hope the Marine Corps will have more success than BLM has had in preventing illegal ORV use.

I applaud the Marine Corps for presenting six alternatives that strictly avoid any conflict with wilderness areas, parks or wildlife refuges. The EIS correctly rejects the notion of repealing parts of the Sheephole Valley, Cleghorn Lakes and Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Areas as part of the base expansion. That should be unthinkable because Congress designated them as wilderness in 1994 to protect their outstanding natural character, after more than 15 years of study and consideration.

Thank you for considering my thoughts. I wish you well in completing this project.

Sincerely yours,

*Betsy Shade M.D.*

**Response to Comment N-18660:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Comment ID: N-18661

Comment ID: N-18661  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 3 Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV Park DATE: 5-28-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other_____               |

I have been camping at the Johnson Valley OHV Park (specifically Means dry lake bed) 2-5 times per year since 2003 and have always appreciated the varied terrain and close proximity to my home in Anaheim. I believe that closing this (or any part of) OHV recreation area would be doing a great disservice to the outdoor sports minded population of Southern California. As time goes by and more of our wilderness (especially unrestricted) areas are closed we are forced to travel further and further (in many cases to another state) to enjoy outdoor recreation, I hope to be able to share this area with my children some day and greatly appreciate your consideration of keeping it open as it is now.

*-Ronald Kirby*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Brandon Kirby
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: 1864 W. Nutwood Pl.

Anaheim, CA 92804

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18661:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18662

Response to Comment N-18662:

Comment ID: N-18662  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps**  
**ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**tal Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Yucca Valley, CA DATE: 5-20-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources            |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <u>RV access</u>     |

Johnson Valley is the largest off road park in the nation. To cut this down by B3 is crazy. Go East towards a mt. by where the land is not being used. There is alot of income to be made by locals from all who visit.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Brian Comp
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): Friends of Grant Rock
- ADDRESS: 55575 Frasy Blvd  
Yucca Valley CA 92284

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18663 (Page 1 of 41)

Comment ID: N-18663  
Date Received: May 27, 2011



May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center) in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Dear Project Manager:

Cadiz Inc. ("Cadiz" or "the Company") appreciates the opportunity to provide the U.S. Department of the Navy ("Navy") in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and the Federal Aviation Administration with comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") expanding the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California ("29 Palms Base"). These comments are being submitted to help ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 *et seq.*), as well as other federal laws, including the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 (42 U.S.C. §§ 4601-4655.) This letter has been prepared through the joint effort of Cadiz and its legal counsel, Brownstein Hyatt Farber Schreck, LLP. It is also being submitted in conjunction with Cadiz's prior 2009 comments. See January 28, 2009 correspondence attached hereto as Attachment 1. Since the below comments are submitted within the comment period established by Navy under NEPA, Cadiz looks forward to reviewing Navy's responses.

According to the DEIS, the purpose of the expansion of the 29 Palms Base is to fulfill the Marine Corps' requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for three Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements. Existing training facilities, ranges, and live-fire ground and air maneuver areas are inadequate to support the requirement for MEB-sized training exercises.

I. INTRODUCTION & OVERVIEW OF COMMENTS

A. Cadiz Has a Substantial Interest in the DEIS and Plan

As Navy is aware, Cadiz owns approximately 17,280 acres within the eastern expansion area which is included as part of Alternative 3 in the DEIS. (See attached map of our landholdings clearly marked within the eastern expansion area (Attachment 2). Alternative 3 proposes to add approximately 22,000 acres of land to the South and approximately 177,000 acres to the East of the 29 Palms Base. Alternative 3 is the only alternative being considered that includes the eastern expansion area.

550 SOUTH HOPE STREET  
SUITE 2830  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90071  
P: 213.271.1600  
F: 213.271.1614

Response to Comment N-18663 (Page 1 of 41):

WAT-1:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 would have a "regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project." The EIS also states that the Cadiz project was uncertain and undergoing environmental review process. The EIS has been revised to update the Cadiz project description for the Final EIS using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc and others. These revisions are not likely to alter the significance of cumulative impacts from Alternative 3.

NEPA-1:

As indicated in Section 2.4.8 of the EIS, an action alternative must be capable of providing land and associated airspace necessary to meet minimum criteria outlines in Section 2.2.1. All six action alternatives meet these minimum criteria.

NEPA-2:

Sections 3.13 and 4.13 of the EIS discuss baseline information and project impacts to water resources. Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS discusses cumulative impacts to water resources and acknowledges that implementation of Alternative 3 would interfere with or preclude the Cadiz Water Conservation and Storage Project, which would have a regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project.

Comment ID: N-18663 (Page 2 of 41)

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 26, 2011  
Page 2

We believe that the unique geography of the eastern expansion area, including Bristol Dry Lake and a portion of Cadiz Dry Lake, Amboy Road and Sheephole Valley Wilderness Area, would make it difficult to meet the stated goals of the expansion without compromising the training mission in some way.

We also believe the agricultural, biological, socioeconomic, water, and transportation impacts associated with expansion to the East as described in Alternative 3 would be significant and should be avoided. We therefore believe consideration of Alternative 3 should be rejected as unreasonable because the consequences of this alternative have evolved beyond the current analysis contained in the DEIS because Water Project on Cadiz's property is now viable with five (5) separate water agencies contractually obligated which is accounted for in the present analysis. *Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power Corp v NRDC* 435 US 519,551 (1978).

Accordingly, Cadiz supports the selection of Alternative 6, which does not involve lands within the eastern expansion area, as the Preferred Alternative.

1. About Cadiz Inc.

Cadiz was founded in 1983 and is a publicly held renewable resources company that owns and maintains approximately 45,000 acres (~70 square miles) of land in three areas of eastern San Bernardino County. Virtually all of this land is underlain by high-quality groundwater resources. Our Cadiz Valley property, which is included in the eastern expansion area, totals approximately 35,000 acres (~55 square miles) and is the largest contiguous private landholding in the region. The location, geology and hydrology of this property is uniquely suited for development of a water supply and storage project, and we are actively engaged in the development of the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project ("Cadiz Valley Water Project" or "Water Project") at the property to provide a sustainable water supply to Southern California.

Additionally, over 9,600 acres of this property is zoned for agriculture and we maintain a sizeable agricultural operation at the property. The infrastructure includes seven wells that are interconnected within this acreage, with total annual production capacity of approximately 13,000 acre feet of water. Additionally, there are housing and kitchen facilities that support up to 300 employees. Permanent crops currently in commercial production include 160 acres of vineyards of certified organic, dried-on-the-vine raisins and 260 acres of lemons. Seasonal vegetable crops include 40 acres of squash and beans.

In addition to water and agricultural development, we are considering solar energy generation and other applications, including recreational and commercial use. We are committed to the implementation of all of our projects.

2. The Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project

The DEIS improperly relies upon 2009 information about the Project thus incorrectly focusing primarily on the existing agricultural operations on the Cadiz property. (See e.g. DEIS, pp. 3.13-12-3.13-13, 3.1-16, 3.12-19, 5.8 (citing MWD and BLM 2001.)) We include here an update on the status of the development of the Project since 2008 and request that information in the Final Environmental Impact Statement ("FEIS") reflect the advancement of project development. This information should be considered as part of the evaluation of the feasibility of Alternative 3 in the FEIS, which renders it to be considered in the rejected alternative analysis (See DEIS § 2.7). Specifically, the DEIS acknowledges the major detrimental impacts to the local area:

One significant unaccounted for impact which effects the Southern California region is the Cadiz Valley Water Project being implemented by Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD). The Water Project is designed to capture and conserve thousands of acre-feet of native groundwater currently being lost to evaporation through the aquifer system

550 SOUTH HOPE STREET  
SUITE 2030  
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90071  
P: 213.271.1600  
F: 213.271.1614

WAT-1

Response to Comment N-18663 (Page 2 of 41):

NEPA-3:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 would have a "regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project." The EIS also states that project was uncertain and undergoing environmental review process. The EIS will be revised to update the project description for the Final EIS using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc and others. These revisions are not likely to alter the significance of cumulative impacts from Alternative 3.

NEPA-4:

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As indicated in Section 2.4.8 of the EIS, an action alternative must be capable of providing land and associated airspace necessary to meet minimum criteria outlines in Section 2.2.1. All six action alternatives meet these minimum criteria

NEPA-5:

Thank you for your comment.

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beneath our Cadiz Valley property. The aquifer system is naturally recharged by precipitation (rain and snowfall) that occurs within the Fenner Valley and Orange Blossom Wash watersheds, an area that is approximately 1,300 square miles. The estimated recharge rate of this area is approximately 32,500 acre-feet/year on average. The proposed Project would be executed in two phases: the Conservation and Recovery Component (Phase 1) and the Imported Water Storage Component (Phase 2).

In Phase 1, a wellfield would be constructed on our property to create a sustainable annual water supply through the capture of the average annual natural recharge in the aquifer system plus an amount needed to maintain hydraulic control in the vicinity of the wellfield. Through the implementation of established groundwater management practices an average of approximately 50,000 acre-feet/year would be recovered by wells and conveyed to the Colorado River Aqueduct — via a 42-mile conveyance pipeline constructed within the Arizona and California Railroad (ARZC) right-of-way — for delivery to participating water agencies throughout Southern California over a period of 50 years. In Phase 1 storage capacity would also be available that could be used by participating agencies to carry-over — or “bank” — annual supplies.

Phase 2 is designed to store imported surplus water available during ‘wet’ years on the Colorado River, or — by way of exchanges — from other sources of surplus water. Water would be conveyed to recharge basins on our property in the Fenner Gap to percolate into the ground for storage and future withdrawal as a dry-year supply. Total imported storage capacity is approximately one million acre-feet. Project facilities for both Phase 1 and Phase 2 would be built on Cadiz’s property and other privately-owned land in the eastern expansion area.

Between 1997 and 2002 we pursued a similar project with the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (“MWD”). Extensive geotechnical, engineering, and environmental analyses were conducted as part of the Final Environmental Impact Report (“EIR”) and Final Environmental Impact Statement (“EIS”) issued in September 2001. The Final EIS was approved by the US Department of the Interior in 2002. However, although the feasibility studies completed under the partnership demonstrated a significant potential for water supply development, MWD decided not to pursue the Program in October 2002. Since 2002, Cadiz has continued to pursue partnerships to develop a revised water supply project different than the Program previously contemplated with MWD.

In September 2008, we secured a right-of-way for the Water Project’s water conveyance pipeline by entering into a lease agreement with the Arizona & California Railroad Company (“ARZC”). The agreement allows for the use of a portion of the railroad’s right-of-way for a period up to 99 years to construct and operate the Water Project’s water conveyance pipeline. The pipeline would be used to convey water between our property and the CRA. The ARZC right-of-way is partly within the eastern expansion area identified in Alternative 3.

In February 2010, we released the details of a comprehensive year-long study measuring the water resources at the Project area. The study was conducted by internationally recognized environmental consulting firm CH2M HILL utilizing new models produced by the U.S. Geological Survey in 2006 and 2008. The work also included the drilling of a series of new wells to further understand the hydrology of the basin. The study estimated the total groundwater in storage in the watersheds tributary to the Project area to be between 17 and 34 million acre-feet, a quantity on par with Lake Mead, the nation’s largest surface reservoir. The study also identified a renewable annual supply of native groundwater in the aquifer system currently being lost to evaporation from Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes. CH2M HILL estimated the recharge rate of the groundwater in the system at approximately 32,500 acre-feet per year. CH2M HILL’s findings, which were peer reviewed by leading groundwater experts, confirmed that the aquifer system could sustainably support the Water Project without harm to the environment. Accordingly, the DEIS’ statement that currently “[t]here is some dispute among experts over exactly how much groundwater is available” and that

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WAT-2:

The comments requests that the EIS acknowledge that the proposed Cadiz project would improve water supplies and evaluate alternatives to replace 50,000 AF of water to Southern California, as well as renewable energy generation that would be lost if Alternative 3 precluded the proposed Cadiz project. These issues are beyond the scope of the EIS.

WAT-3:

Section 4.13.4.1 addresses the potential impacts from Alternative 3 to groundwater quality, and concludes “Because of the ongoing management and minimization of MC residues at the Combat Center and implementation of management and minimization of MC residues in the east acquisition area, impacts to surface water quality from Alternative 3 MCs would be less than significant.” The low precipitation rate, intermittent receiving surface water bodies, and deep groundwater, limits the migration of MC residues and thus the potential impacts of use of munitions.

As discussed in Section 3.4.3.1, the Marine Corps’ Range Environmental Vulnerability Assessment (REVA) program uses an EPA-approved screening model for Munitions Constituents in surface and groundwater. The REVA evaluation occurs every 5 years and the first reassessment began in October 2010. Confirmatory sampling will occur if a future REVA evaluation indicates there is a source, pathway, and receptor with detectable levels of Munitions Constituents.

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"[e]stimates have ranged from 2,000 to 30,000 AF per year (2,500 to 37,000 ML per year)" is erroneous and based on outdated information. (DEIS, p. 3.13-20.)

More importantly, the Project is rapidly moving forward as evidenced by participating agency agreements entered into with five Southern California water providers to participate in the development of the Project. In June 2010, the Company signed agreements with Santa Margarita Water District ("SMWD") and Three Valleys Municipal Water District, which together serve over 650,000 customers in parts of Orange and Los Angeles Counties. These agreements were followed by the addition of Golden State Water Company, California's second largest investor-owned water utility, in late June 2010. In October 2010, the Project also added Suburban Water Systems, a wholly-owned subsidiary of SouthWest Water Company, which provides water, wastewater and municipal utilities services to a population of over one million people from across the southern tier of the U.S.A. In May 2011, Jurupa Community Services District, which serves approximately 100,000 customers in western Riverside County also joined the Project. As part of the agreements, the five water providers have committed agency funds to the review of the Project pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). These funds grant the right to acquire a firm annual supply of water from the final Project. Additionally, the providers acquired options to storage rights in Phase 1 that will allow them to manage their supplies to complement their other water resources. As part of its agreements, SMWD became the lead agency for the CEQA process.

As you are aware, in February 2011, SMWD issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) of a Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) formally commencing the public portion of the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA") process for the Project. (Attachment 3.) A 30-day scoping period was initiated and scoping meetings were held by SMWD on March 16th and March 24th. Preparation of the DEIR is ongoing and the document is expected to be released for public comment in the coming months. Accordingly, the FEIS should reference the new Project and the NOP release in describing the Cadiz Project.

**B. Summary of Comments**

As set forth in greater detail below, Cadiz's comments focus on: (1) the assumptions behind the DEIS and Plan and the funding necessary for the Plan and its mitigation measures; and (2) the analysis of Alternative No. 3 and its environmental effects.

With regard to Navy's assumptions, the DEIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 does not meet all of the project needs and objectives. (DEIS at 2-18) For example, it does not allow for restricted public access for recreational use on at least a portion of the acquired land in the west study area (Johnson Valley), as do Alternatives 4, 5 and 6. Impacts which it does not address or explain are why it would acquire the east study area for exclusive year-around military use which would somehow allow and safeguard public use of Amboy Road. Similarly, Alternative 3 involves reclassifying two existing MOA/Air Traffic Control Assigned Airspace (ATCAAs) as Restricted Areas (with the same lateral dimensions). (*Id.*)

Despite these acknowledgements, Navy assumes that Alternative 3 is reasonable and desirable. Additionally, the analysis in the DEIS does not treat water supply use as a superior economic resource to nearby communities. The Navy's assumptions regarding expanded base operations and its analysis of impacts are inappropriate and result in an DEIS that is tipped in favor of expanded operations rather than recognizing the principal need of a clean and reliable water supply. Additionally, the DEIS does not address that Cadiz, SMWD and the other participating agencies' unique water service area boundaries will be effected by taking of the Cadiz lands. *See generally*, 42 U.S.C. §§ 4601-4655.

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WAT-1

NEPA-1

NEPA-2

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**LU-1:**

Section 5.3.2 of the EIS identifies cumulative projects including alternative energy projects proposed within the east acquisition study area boundaries. Section 5.4.1.3 (Cumulative Land Use Impacts with Alternative 3) has been updated to clearly identify cumulative impacts within the east acquisition study area boundaries in regards to alternative energy projects.

**LU-2:**

EIS Section 4.3.4 conservatively assesses that there would be a loss of 100 jobs from displacement of the current operations of Cadiz Inc. In addition to the direct loss of jobs, the analysis includes the impact that those lost jobs would have on regional expenditures and tax revenues (the results of this analysis are shown in Table 4.3-7 & Table 4.3.8). Additional information on Socioeconomics modeling can be found in Appendix K of the Final EIS.

**SOC-1:**

EIS Section 4.3.4 conservatively assesses that there would be a loss of 50 jobs from the displacement of two current mining operations located within the east study area. In addition to the direct loss of jobs, the analysis includes the impact that those lost jobs would have on regional expenditures and tax revenues (the results of which are shown in Table 4.3-7 & Table 4.3.8). Additional information on impacts to businesses, under Alternative 3, has been added to Section 4.3.4 of the Final EIS.

Section 4.3.4.4 has been updated with information on the Cadiz project as indicated in this comment letter.

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Moreover, the development of the Plan alternatives is inadequate, specifically Alternative 3, is based on outdated and incomplete information. See *infra*, ¶ III (explaining concerns re. impacts on water supply, groundwater quality, energy production, agriculture, socioeconomic impacts on local businesses, residents and the County, economic impacts of land acquisition, and transportation impacts). *State of California v Block* (9th Cir. 1982) 690 F.2d 753, 766-767.

These issues must be analyzed in the DEIS, particularly given that Cadiz and its associated contractors are involved in a water resources proceeding that seeks to balance the protection of Southern California’s water supplies.

**II. THE NAVY’S OBLIGATIONS UNDER THE NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT**

NEPA compels federal agencies to consider the consequences of their proposed activities on the human environment. 42 U.S.C. § 4331. The statute requires federal agencies to produce a DEIS when proposing to engage in any “major Federal actions” that will significantly affect the human environment. 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C). A significance determination requires agencies to consider the context of an action and the intensity of its impacts. First, context refers to analyzing an action in several aspects such as the affected region, the affected interests, and the locality. Under the regulation, both short and long term effects are relevant. Second, intensity refers to the severity of impact which considers a series of factors:

- (a) impacts both beneficial and adverse;
- (b) the degree to which the proposed action affects public health and safety;
- (c) unique characteristics of the geographic area;
- (d) the degree to which effects on the environment are likely to be highly controversial;
- (e) the degree to which effects on the environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks;
- (f) the precedential effects of an action;
- (g) whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts;
- (h) adverse effects on historic resources;
- (i) adverse effects on an endangered or threatened species or its habitat;
- (j) whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state or local environmental law.

NEPA-3

NEPA-4

<sup>1</sup> A major federal action is federal action that requires substantial planning, time, resources, or expenditure. *Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc. v. Grant* (E.D.N.C. 1972) 341 F.Supp. 356, 366-67.

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**SOC-2:**

Table 4.3-9 shows that the expected reduction in county property tax revenues under Alternative 3 would be \$160,912. Text in Section 4.3.4.3 and explains that this figure is insignificant relative to overall San Bernardino property tax revenues that amounts to \$585.6 million. The determination of less than significant impact is made based on the calculation that lost property tax revenues would represent less than 0.03% of total county property tax revenues.

**NEPA-6:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**SOC-3:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley.

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*Environmental Protection Information Center v. Blackwell* (N.D. Cal. 2004) 389 F.Supp.2d 1174.

An agency is then required to prepare an environmental impact statement if the proposed action has the potential to significantly affect the quality of human environment and the action cannot be modified to avoid such impacts. Under these circumstances, as here, NEPA requires a DEIS disclose:

- The environmental impact of the proposed action
- Any adverse environmental effects that will be unavoidable if the proposed action is implemented
- Alternatives to the proposed action
- The relationship between local short-term uses of the environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity
- Any irreversible and irretrievable commitments of resources resulting from implementation of the proposed action

42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(c); see also 40 C.F.R. § 1508.11 (Defining EIS).

In order for the DEIS to adequately justify the expense of taxpayer monies on a project that will cause significant environmental impacts, it must contain a purpose and need section explaining why the action is necessary and worthwhile. This section sets forth the parameters of the required reasonable range of alternatives, including the proposed action. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.13. Here, the Purpose and Need section in the DEIS states the Proposed Action will "fulfill the Marine Corps' requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), each consisting of three battalion task forces and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements." (DEIS at p. ES-1.) As set forth below, this need can be adequately achieved without Alternative 3 being considered.

**A. Required Coordination with State and Local Agencies**

In preparing its DEIS, the Navy is governed not only by the text of the NEPA statute and the Council on Environmental Quality's implementing regulations, but also by the Department of the Interior's NEPA implementing procedures. See, e.g., 65 Fed. Reg. 52212 (Aug. 28, 2000). These procedures require that the underlying environmental analysis

"factually, objectively, and comprehensively analyze the environmental effects of the proposed actions and their reasonable alternatives. [The Navy's management should] systematically analyze the environmental impacts of alternatives, and particularly those alternatives and measures that would reduce, mitigate or prevent adverse environmental impacts or which would enhance environmental quality." 65 Fed. Reg. at 55213.

Under NEPA, the Intergovernmental Coordination Act of 1968 (31 U.S.C. § 5506), and the Intergovernmental Coordination Executive Order (Exec. Order No. 12,372, reprinted in 31 U.S.C. § 6506), federal agencies are required to solicit and consider local views on their projects to the degree to which the potential impacts may produce serious conflicts with local entities and conditions.

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TRN-1:

Section 4.6.4 of the EIS addresses transportation and circulation impacts under Alternative 3. As noted in the EIS, since there are no other paved roads in the vicinity of North Amboy Road, it is expected that impacts to transportation and circulation would be significant. To lessen impacts the Marine Corps identified a possible mitigation measure for implementation, which would include coordination with the City of Twentynine Palms, the County of San Bernardino, and other local authorities to provide as much advance notice as possible for the two days per year that North Amboy Road would be closed. Proper signage and warnings would be placed along I-40 and National Trails Highway to the north, and in the City of Twentynine Palms to the south to alert drivers of the road closures.

GEN-1 and GEN-2:

Thank you for your comment.

NEPA-4

NEPA-5

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Specifically, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) NEPA Regulations "encourage" integration with state and local land use requirements (with the goal of "one project-one document"). As part of this process the lead agency can designate "cooperating agencies" that are involved in the NEPA document preparation and may use the document to satisfy their own environmental review requirements to the extent allowed by law. At the request of the lead agency, any federal, state, local or tribal agency with jurisdiction by law or special expertise can be a cooperating agency.

To the extent possible, all national, regional, State, and local viewpoints shall be considered in planning development programs and projects of the United States Government or assisted by the Government. State and local government objectives and the objectives of regional organizations shall be considered within a framework of national public objectives expressed in laws of the United States. Available projections of future conditions in the United States and needs of regions, States, and localities shall be considered in plan formulation, evaluation, and review (31 U.S.C. § 6506(c)).

Moreover, CEQ NEPA Regulations require federal agencies to address inconsistencies between a proposal and state/local laws or plans. The NEPA document should describe the extent to which the federal agency would reconcile the inconsistency (40 C.F.R. § 1506.2(d); see also *Village of Palatine v. U.S. Postal Service*, 756 F.Supp. 1079 (N.D.Ill. 1990) addressing the extent to which a federal agency must document compliance with the Intergovernmental Cooperation Act, explain a decision to conflict with local regulations, and consider project alternatives.)

Additionally, the Navy shall:

- (1) Assess environmental consequences of proposed actions that could affect the quality of the human environment in the United States, its territories, and possessions in accordance with DOD and CEQ regulations;
- (2) Use a systematic, interdisciplinary approach that will ensure the integrated use of the natural and social sciences and environmental considerations in planning and decisionmaking where there may be an impact on man's environment;
- (3) Ensure that presently unmeasured environmental amenities are considered in the decisionmaking process;
- (4) Consider the reasonable alternatives to recommended actions in any proposal that would involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources;
- (5) Make available to states, counties, municipalities, institutions, and individuals advice and information useful in restoring, maintaining, and enhancing the quality of the environment; and
- (6) Use ecological information in planning and developing resource-oriented projects.

32 CFR § 775.3.

Relations with state, local and regional agencies. Close and harmonious planning relations with local and regional agencies and planning commissions of adjacent cities, counties, and states, for cooperation and resolution of mutual land use and environment-related problems should be established. Additional coordination may be obtained from state and area-wide planning and development "clearinghouses". These are agencies which have been established pursuant to Executive Order 12372 of July 14, 1982 (3 CFR, 1982 Comp., p. 197).

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NEPA-5

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The clearinghouses serve a review and coordination function for Federal activities and the proponent may gain insights on other agencies' approaches to environmental assessments, surveys, and studies in relation to any current proposal. The clearinghouses would also be able to assist in identifying possible participants in scoping procedures for projects requiring an EIS.

NEPA-5

32 CFR § 775.10

III. CONCERNS WITH THE DEIS

Having spent more than 25 years and hundreds of millions of dollars developing the Water Project and our agricultural operations, as described above, including environmental reviews for both endeavors, we welcome the selection of Alternative 6 as the Preferred Alternative and believe it would reduce the direct impacts of this proposed expansion on the Company and our operations.

However, as one of the largest private landowners in the region, we remain concerned about the impacts that expansion of the 29 Palms Base would have on the local community, the environment, and business and industry in the area, and its impacts to Southern California. The following is a list of concerns we have with the DEIS, including Alternative 3. We also provide additional information that should be considered and included in the FEIS:

1. Water Resources: Impacts on Southern California's water supply.

The DEIS correctly finds that Alternative 3 would "result in significant and unmitigable impacts to... water resources as a result of acquisition of Cadiz Inc. landholdings and eliminating or curtailing their agricultural operation and inhibiting Cadiz Inc. from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project." (DEIS, pp. ES-14, ES-36 (Cumulative Impacts), 5-52.) Alternative 3 would result in significant and unmitigable impacts to water resources and "have a regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project." (DEIS, pp. 5-52.) As described above, we are currently pursuing a water project that would make available a reliable supply of water to Southern California. This DEIS fails to recognize that the Cadiz Project will improve water supply reliability by conserving the average annual sustainable yield of the local watersheds, improve supply reliability for Southern California water providers, and reduce dependence on imported water by utilizing a source of water that is not dependent upon the California State Water Project (SWP), the Colorado River, or the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta). The state of California currently faces a long-term water supply crisis. Imported supplies are limited, population growth continues and California hydrology is very unpredictable with dry-years occurring every 3 in 10 years. Southern California receives imported water from the Colorado River and from the Bay-Delta via the SWP, but these supplies are becoming less reliable. The Colorado River flow has diminished due to drought and other factors. The Upper Colorado River Basin is experiencing a protracted multi-year drought which began in October 1999. And, in 2003, California was limited to its basic apportionment of 4.4 million acre-feet from the Colorado River, reducing the supply available to fill the Colorado River Aqueduct. Likewise, SWP flow has diminished due to environmental issues on the Bay-Delta, drought and other factors. The SWP's ability to deliver water to its contractors in any given year depends on many factors, including precipitation, runoff, snowpack levels, water in storage and the pumping capacity in the Bay-Delta. Deliveries fluctuate dramatically from year to year. In its latest reliability report, Department of Water Resources (DWR) predicts that State Water Project contractors will only receive on average, 60% of their contracted allocations. Concerns over pumping water out of the Bay-Delta and lawsuits restricting water use to safeguard threatened and endangered fish species, including several recent judicial decisions, have jeopardized Bay-Delta supplies. In accordance with the recent court decisions, DWR modified its SWP operations to protect endangered species of fish. Modification of these project operations has dramatically reduced SWP deliveries. As a result, many Southern California water agencies have implemented aggressive conservation programs. In addition,

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many Southern California water agencies are already maximizing the local water supply through projects that emphasize groundwater development and storage, water reclamation (recycling), and desalination. Nonetheless, these efforts are not sufficient to replace diminishing imported water supplies. The Cadiz Project is one of the few alternatives that could provide a much needed reliable supply of water to Southern California in dry years. This project will also save Southern Californians money by providing a local source of water and therefore use less energy to provide to Southern California agencies.

Importantly, we disagree with the DEIS's findings that "[s]hould Cadiz Inc.'s plans for development of groundwater production to serve the Los Angeles area become viable, it may be possible to provide reasonable access to the groundwater assets, from either inside or outside the boundaries of the Alternative 3 east study area." (DEIS, 4.3-17.) Whether the base expansion to the East could co-exist with the project is uncertain and needs to be analyzed prior to this Alternative being advanced further. Specifically, the concern stems from the "live fire maneuver" requirement dictates removing the Water Project land from consideration for the same reasons as other locales were taken out of consideration. "Other regions studied could not support MEB-sized MAGTF training without significant simulation and constructive forces; thereby failing to meet the criteria for live-fire maneuver training for three battalion task forces." See DEIS, 2-95-96.

WAT-2

Accordingly, as now set forth, this alternative single-handedly may eliminate this new supply, thus hindering California's efforts to find immediate solutions to the ongoing drought and water supply crisis. Without new supplies, such as those made available by the Cadiz Project, Southern California will continue to face several water supply challenges. Accordingly, we suggest that the Final EIS for the 29 Palms Base Expansion thoroughly explore the environmental impacts of each alternative water supply source to replace the 50,000 annual acre-feet provided by this project, as well as the community impacts of depriving Southern California of this much-needed water resource, given the progress we have made in the development of the Project since 2008 and the continued challenges facing California water suppliers.

1. **Water Resources:** Impacts on groundwater water quality —

The DEIS provides that with implementation of mitigation, "Alternative 3 would have [a]...LSI [Less than Significant Impact] to groundwater quality and groundwater flow patterns." While the DEIS recognizes that "[w]ith the exception of the areas underlying and adjacent to Bristol Lake and Cadiz Lake, the quality of the groundwater in the Fenner Gap area is relatively good, with TDS concentrations averaging approximately 300 mg/l," it does not analyze the groundwater quality impacts of expanding the base into the region. (DEIS, p. 13-13.) Instead, the DEIS summarily concludes that [b]ased on the in-place procedures described in Alternative 1, the impacts from the storage and disposal of wastewaters, storage and use of petroleum products, and/or containment and cleanup of spills of waste or hazardous material, Alternative 3 impacts to surface waters would be less than significant." (DEIS, p. 4-13-9.) There is a potential for groundwater contamination from ammunition, bombs, fuel, hazardous chemicals that are used in military exercises on land that overlies the Cadiz Valley aquifer system within the proposed expansion area. These impacts were not adequately assessed in the DEIS and should be considered.

WAT-3

2. **Impacts on energy production —**

Also described above, Cadiz is actively exploring possible solar energy generation and other renewable energy projects at our property. There are also a number of applications on file with the Bureau of Land Management for solar and wind energy projects within the expansion areas. The EIS should analyze how the expansion would limit alternative energy generation in the region, which might lead to environmental consequences such as increased fossil fuel usage, increased carbon dioxide emissions and ultimately exacerbation of global climate change. We also suggest

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that the EIS should examine the environmental impacts of procuring these alternative energy supplies from less environmentally friendly sources, such as fossil fuels, and where these alternative energy sources might come from.

LU-1

3. **Impacts on agriculture** —

As stated in the DEIS, Alternative 3 would be inconsistent with San Bernardino County agricultural land use designation in the east study area and associated agricultural operations on 1,600 acres (648 hectares) within the Cadiz Inc. landholdings. (DEIS, p. 4.1-11.) The DEIS correctly finds that “[t]hese inconsistencies with plans and policies related to mining on public lands and agriculture on private, agriculturally designated lands are considered to be significant and unavoidable. (DEIS, p. 4.1-11.) As described in the DEIS, Alternative 3 would eliminate Cadiz’s agricultural operations, which include grape vineyards, citrus orchards and other diverse plantings, impacting the San Bernardino County’s agricultural sector and eliminating hundreds of farming jobs. It would also limit access to the existing agricultural water supply. We are one of the only agricultural operations in the surrounding area and employ over 100 personnel at our ranch. We can employ up to 300 during full scale harvesting operations. The elimination of this operation should be more thoroughly accounted for in the FEIS, including the value of not only the produced crops, but also the tax revenue associated with these operations that the County receives and the infrastructure in place at the property.

LU-2

4. **Socioeconomic impacts on local businesses** —

In addition to our operations, Alternative 3 would impact the operations of a number of area businesses and their employees, including the salt mining operations on Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes; the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Corporation and the Arizona & California Railroad Company; area Marble quarries; and those companies that provide services to these businesses, including water haulers and other suppliers. These impacts are not adequately described in the DEIS and should be considered further in the FEIS.

SOC-1

5. **Socioeconomic impact on the County of San Bernardino/Impacts to Displaced Businesses** —

The DEIS provides: The “[d]irect impact from acquisition of private property (103 private parcels): includes two mining operations and one agricultural/water venture potentially purchased and displaced, resulting in a direct loss of an estimated 150 jobs [100 from Cadiz]. Direct regional impact from lost sales and tax revenue (\$24,221 or -0.3% compared to baseline) related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.” (DEIS, p. 6-5.) The DEIS concludes that given “the existence of programs to assist and fairly compensate displaced businesses, and the fact that only three such businesses occur in the acquisition study areas, Alternative 3 would have less than significant direct impacts to private property owners in the west and south study areas.” (DEIS, p. 4-3.18.) We disagree with the DEIS’s findings and analysis of the impacts from acquisition of the Cadiz property. As we stated in our 2009 scoping comment letter, we believe the taking of large amounts of land for the 29 Palms Base expansion could result in a much greater level of reduced tax rolls or increased taxes on remaining property in the area. The potential impacts on the community and on the human environment that could result from removing these lands from the tax rolls were not thoroughly assessed in the DEIS and should be reevaluated in the FEIS. In addition, the DEIS’s estimation that Alternative 3 will result in a direct job loss of 100 jobs from the Cadiz agricultural operations ignores the thousands of jobs that the Cadiz Valley Water Project will support and create in the near future. In May 2011, Inland Empire economist John Husing Ph.D. issued a report which found that the Cadiz Valley Water Project would create and support over 5,900 jobs, generate more than \$878 million in economic activity over its two phases, and infuse tens of

SOC-2

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 May 26, 2011  
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millions in tax revenue to local governments.<sup>2</sup> This report should be considered and consulted when evaluating economic impacts of Alternative 3 in the FEIS. A copy of the report is provided as an attachment to this letter. (Attachment 4.)

SOC-2

6. Economic impacts of land acquisition on the federal budget —

As stated in our 2009 scoping comment letter and reiterated above herein, Cadiz’s landholdings and assets within the eastern expansion area are extremely valuable and include groundwater resources, extensive agricultural operations and other potential uses. The DEIS did not discuss the cost to the Navy, the federal government and ultimately the public of such a significant taking of private land. This should be evaluated in the Final EIS.

NEPA-6

7. Socioeconomic impacts to residents of nearby towns

The expansion would have socioeconomic impacts to nearby towns which need to be more fully addressed in the FEIS. (i.e. Twenty-nine Palms, Ludlow, Amboy, Charming, Danby, Essex, Fenner & Goffs).

SOC-3

8. Transportation Impacts —

The eastern expansion alternative would limit public access to existing roads within the proposed expansion area, including Amboy Road (the only access from Twentynine Palms and the Morongo Basin to Route 66, Interstate 40 and Interstate 15), Route 66 (National Trails Highway), Salsus Road, Cadiz/Rice Road and other unpaved County roads. National Trails Highway is an international destination that currently draws over 300,000 visitors annually. The County of San Bernardino has designated National Trails Highway and Amboy Road as important County connectors in the county surface transportation plan. Additionally, expansion would impact the Arizona & California Railroad Company and its ability to move freight along its existing rail line, and would limit the public’s access to Wilderness Areas within and adjacent to the proposed expansion area. The analysis of Alternative 3 in the DEIS does reference impacts to Amboy Road, but does not adequately plan for traffic impacts should access to this vital transportation route be limited.

TRN-1

9. Other impacts —

In addition, impacts on biological resources, including wildlife, native vegetation (Harwood’s eriastrum) [DEIS, p. 4.10-55 “Significant impacts would occur to populations of Harwood’s eriastrum in the east study area north of Cadiz Dry Lake”], native animals and the view shed within and adjacent to the proposed expansion area, wilderness and recreation areas, as well as regional wildlife movement corridors and wildlife habitat, land use designations, including the CDCA Plan, the NECO Plan, as well as electrical, gas and oil utility corridors, aviation, including impacts to air space for both commercial and civil aviation in and adjacent to the proposed expansion area, air quality, including impacts from increased fuel usage by tanks, airplanes, trucks and other vehicles on the air quality in and adjacent to the proposed expansion area, and cumulative impacts, including those on the community, the environment, culture and way of life (includes land use planning, economic changes, physical changes, disruption and fragmentation of the

GEN-1

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20110524006291/en/Cadiz-Valley-Water-Protect-Create-5900-Jobs>.

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Comment ID: N-18663 (Page 12 of 41)

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 26, 2011  
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sensitive desert environment, and ultimate cleanup of the site) should continue to be addressed by the FEIS as they were in the DEIS.

GEN-1

IV. CONCLUSION

Cadiz thanks the Navy for providing the opportunity to comment upon the proposed 29 Palms Base and Draft Environmental Impact Statement. For the reasons discussed above, Cadiz believes the DEIS can be corrected and requests the Navy, Bureau of Land Management and the Federal Aviation Administration consider these comments reflecting the concerns it, and agencies involved with the Water Project face regarding both water supply, quantity and quality issues while protecting other valuable resources. Specifically, Cadiz respectfully requests consideration of the following: elimination of Alternative 3 from consideration and/or additional reasonable alternatives, conducting further study and evaluation of impacts, further discussion of appropriate mitigation measures, including any necessary condemnation valuation, and take whatever further actions necessary to develop an DEIS in compliance with NEPA which can serve as the basis for informed decision-making and public scrutiny, as well as approval of an appropriate 29 Palms Base expansion of its operations.

GEN-2

We also request to be notified of any and all future actions regarding the DEIS, preparation of additional studies, as well as preparation of the FEIS. Please add Ms. Courtney Degener to your list of persons receiving notice of this project. You may contact her at cdegener@cadizinc.com and/or 213-271-1605.

Sincerely,

CADIZ INC



By Timothy Shaheen  
Chief Financial Officer, Cadiz Inc.  
CEO, Cadiz Real Estate LLC

Attachments:

1. Cadiz's January 28, 2009 Comment Letter
2. Map of Cadiz Landholdings
3. Notice of Preparation of Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project, February 28, 2011.
4. John Husing Economic Impact Report, Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery & Storage Project, May 2011.

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January 28, 2009

Mr. Joseph Ross  
Project Manager  
29 Palms Proposed Training Land/Airspace Acquisition Project  
MAGTFTC/MGAGCC  
Bldg 1554  
Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

RE: Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Proposed Acquisition of Lands & Establishment of Airspace Contiguous to the Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California

Dear Mr. Ross:

Cadiz Inc. appreciates the opportunity to comment on the scoping process for the Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") that the Department of the Navy ("Navy") is developing in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and the Federal Aviation Administration to study alternatives for expanding the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California ("29 Palms Base").

Cadiz understands from the Notice of Intent that the Navy is currently considering five alternatives and a no action alternative for the expansion of the 29 Palms Base. Cadiz owns approximately 30,000 acres within the eastern expansion area under consideration as part of Alternative 3 of the EIS. As described in the Notice of Intent, Alternative 3 would add 22,000 acres of land in the South and would add approximately 228,000 acres to the East of the base and is the only Alternative being considered that includes the eastern expansion area. Attached please find a map of our landholdings clearly marked within the eastern expansion area. According to the Notice of Intent, the purpose of the expansion of the 29 Palms Base is to meet the Marine Corps Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) sustained, combined arms, live-fire and maneuver training requirements by having an area to operate a three battalion training exercise for 48-72 hours.

Founded in 1983, Cadiz, Inc. is a publicly held land and water resource development company that currently owns and maintains approximately 45,000 acres (~70 square miles) of land in three areas of eastern San Bernardino County. Virtually all of this land is underlain by high-quality groundwater resources. Our Cadiz Valley property, which is included in the eastern expansion area, totals approximately 35,000 acres (~55 square miles) and is the largest contiguous private landholding in the region. The aquifer system that underlies this property is naturally recharged by precipitation (both rain and snowfall) within a watershed of approximately 1,300 square miles, which experts estimate contains roughly 30 – 40 million acre-feet of indigenous groundwater. The location, geology and hydrology of this property is uniquely suited for development of an aquifer storage,

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recovery and dry-year supply project to augment the water supplies available to Southern California and we have been pursuing the implementation of such a project at our property for a number of years.

Additionally, over 9,600 acres of this property is zoned for agriculture and we maintain a sizeable agricultural operation at the property. Approximately 1,000 acres are currently under cultivation and we are beginning preparations to plant 500 new acres in the spring. In addition to our water and agricultural development, we are considering solar energy generation and other applications, including recreational and commercial use, and we are committed to the implementation of these new projects.

The Cadiz Valley Dry Year Supply Project

The Cadiz Valley Dry-Year Supply Project ("Project") is an aquifer storage, recovery and dry-year supply project designed to provide Southern California with as much as 150,000 acre-feet/year of clean and reliable water during droughts, emergencies, or other periods of need. Most of the Project facilities will be constructed on our property within the eastern expansion area. As noted above, the aquifer system that underlies this landholding is naturally recharged by precipitation (rain and snowfall) that occurs within a regional watershed of approximately 1,300 square miles. Government and private sector experts estimate that this watershed is recharged at an average rate of up to 40,000 acre-feet/year. Withdrawals of indigenous and stored groundwater from this aquifer system can provide a new supply of up to 150,000 acre-feet in dry years.

The Project is also designed to store surplus water available during "wet" years on the Colorado River, or – by way of exchanges – from other sources of surplus water. Total storage capacity is greater than one million acre-feet. When needed, indigenous groundwater or previously stored water would be recovered by wells and conveyed to the Colorado River Aqueduct – via a 42-mile conveyance pipeline – for delivery to participating water agencies throughout Southern California.

The Project has undergone extensive geotechnical, engineering, and environmental analyses as part of the Final Environmental Impact Report ("EIR") and Final Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") issued in September 2001. The EIS was approved by the US Department of the Interior in 2002. Further, in 2006, PCR Services Corporation finalized a complete update study of the EIR for state environmental law purposes.

In furtherance of the Project, we have worked to secure necessary permits from the County of San Bernardino and the state of California and are also in discussions with a number of water agencies that are interested in participating in the Project. In 2008, we also entered into a 99-year lease with the Arizona & California Railroad for constructing the conveyance pipeline and electrical transmission line on their right-of-way (partly within the eastern expansion area.)

Issues to be addressed in Environmental Impact Statement

As one of the largest private landowners in San Bernardino County, we are concerned about the impacts that this proposal would have on the local community, the environment as well as business and industry in the area. Having spent more than 25 years and hundreds of millions of dollars developing the Cadiz Project and our agricultural operations, including extensive environmental reviews for both endeavors, and given that the 29 Palms Base expansion would involve significantly more land and activities than our Project and agricultural operations, we suggest that the EIS provide a comprehensive analysis of the potential impacts on the extensive expansion areas being considered.

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- extensive agricultural operations and other potential uses. The EIS must study the cost to the Navy, the federal government and ultimately the public of such a significant taking of private land.
8. Socioeconomic impacts to residents of nearby towns (i.e. Twenty-nine Palms, Ludlow, Amboy, Chambliss, Danby, Essex, Fenner & Goffs).
  9. Transportation Impacts – The eastern expansion alternative would limit public access to existing roads within the proposed expansion area, including Amboy Road (the only access from Twenty-nine Palms and the Morongo Basin to Route 66, Interstate 40 and Interstate 15), Route 66 (National Trails Highway), Saltus Road, Cadiz/Rice Road and other unpaved County roads. National Trails Highway is an international destination that currently draws over 300,000 visitors annually. The County of San Bernardino has designated National Trails Highway and Amboy Road as important County connectors in the county surface transportation plan. Additionally, expansion would impact the Arizona & California Railroad Company and its ability to move freight along its existing rail line, and would limit the public's access to Wilderness Areas within and adjacent to the proposed expansion area.
  10. Impacts on biological resources, including wildlife, native vegetation, native animals and the view shed within and adjacent to the proposed expansion area.
  11. Impacts on wilderness and recreation areas, as well as regional wildlife movement corridors and wildlife habitat.
  12. Impacts on land use designations, including the CDCA Plan, the NECO Plan, as well as electrical, gas and oil utility corridors.
  13. Aviation impacts, including impacts to air space for both commercial and civil aviation in and adjacent to the proposed expansion area.
  14. Air Quality Impacts, including impacts from increased fuel usage by tanks, airplanes, trucks and other vehicles on the air quality in and adjacent to the proposed expansion area.
  15. Cumulative impacts, including those on the community, the environment, culture and way of life (Includes land use planning, economic changes, physical changes, disruption and fragmentation of the sensitive desert environment, and ultimate cleanup of the site).

In addition to these impacts, we hope that the EIS will also provide a complete explanation of how each alternative would be utilized to meet the stated training goals for the expansion. We believe that the unique geography of the eastern expansion area, including Bristol Dry Lake, Amboy Road and Sheephole Valley Wilderness Area, would make it difficult to meet the stated goals of the expansion without compromising the training mission in some way.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments at the scoping stage of the EIS process, and would welcome any dialogue on the concerns we have raised in this letter. We ask to be notified of all future actions with respect to the preparation of this EIS, given our substantial interest in the project. Any follow-up should be directed to: Courtney Degener at 213-271-1603.

Sincerely,  
CADIZ INC.

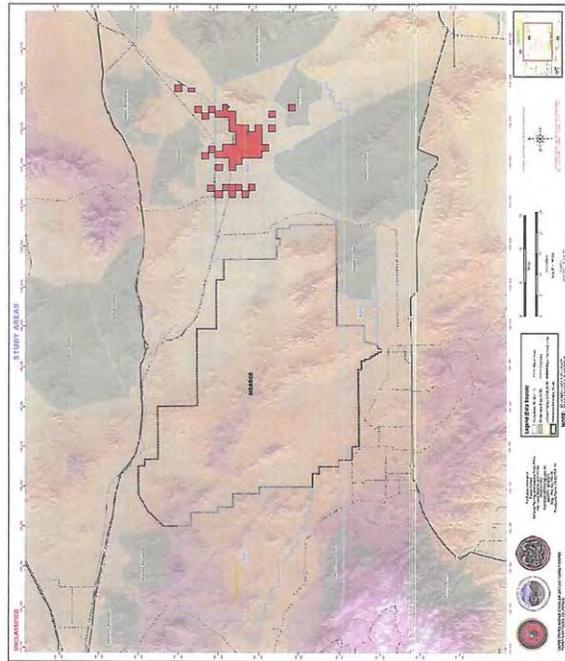


By Richard E. Stoddard  
Chairman & CEO, Cadiz Real Estate LLC

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
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*Santa Margarita Water District*

**NOTICE OF PREPARATION OF A  
DRAFT EIR AND  
PUBLIC SCOPING MEETING NOTICE**

**Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project**

**To:** California Office of Planning and Research;  
Responsible and Trustee Agencies; County Clerks;  
and Other Interested Parties

**Subject:** Notice of Preparation of an Environmental Impact Report and Public  
Scoping Meeting Notice

**Project:** Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project

**Lead Agency:** Santa Margarita Water District

This Notice of Preparation (NOP) has been prepared to notify agencies and interested parties that the Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) as the Lead Agency is beginning preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) for the proposed Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project (Project). SMWD, along with other participating water agencies acting as Responsible Agencies, is proposing to implement the Project in partnership with Cadiz Inc. (Cadiz), which owns approximately 34,000 acres of land located in the Cadiz and Fenner Valleys of San Bernardino County, and the Fenner Mutual Water Company (FMWC), a non-profit California mutual water company formed to deliver water at cost to its shareholders that are public water systems that purchase water from the Project.

Substantial quantities of percolating groundwater underlie the Cadiz property. The groundwater naturally flows to the Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes (Dry Lakes) and is lost to evaporation. The proposed Project would be executed in two phases: the first phase of the Project is the Conservation and Recovery Component, and the second phase is the Imported Water Storage Component. In the first phase, the Conservation and Recovery Component would be constructed to capture and conserve the average annual natural recharge in the Fenner and northern Bristol Valleys that would otherwise discharge to the Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes. The Project would construct extraction wells (wellfield) on the Cadiz property and a 42-mile underground water conveyance pipeline within an active railroad right-of-way that intersects the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA). The

26111 Antonio Parkway, Rancho Santa Margarita, CA 92688 • Mailing - P.O. Box 7005, Mission Viejo, CA 92690-7005  
Web: [www.SMWD.com](http://www.SMWD.com)

Customer Service (949) 459-6420 • Administration (949) 459-6600 • Operations (949) 459-6430

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Project would extract the amount of water that would otherwise flow to the Dry Lakes plus the amount needed to maintain hydraulic control in the vicinity of the wellfield. The pipeline would be sized to convey an annual average of 50,000 acre-feet per year (AFY) of water from the Fenner Valley groundwater basin to SMWD and other participating water agencies, for a period of 50 years.

A second phase of the Project, the Imported Water Storage Component, would make available up to one million acre-feet (MAF) of groundwater storage space to be used as part of a conjunctive use project, which is consistent with State policy favoring and supporting conjunctive use projects (Cal. Water Code § 79170 et seq.). Under the Imported Water Storage Component, Colorado River water would be conveyed to recharge basins in the Fenner Valley to percolate into the ground for storage and future withdrawal as a dry-year supply. Because the Imported Water Storage Component would be implemented at a later date, it will be evaluated in the EIR on a programmatic basis. Prior to implementing the Imported Water Storage Component, it will undergo appropriate further environmental review consistent with CEQA.

SMWD is acting as Lead Agency as the first public agency with a discretionary decision regarding the Project and because the Project will be owned in part and operated by SMWD. SMWD is soliciting the views of interested persons and agencies as to the scope and content of the environmental information to be studied in the EIR. In accordance with CEQA, agencies are requested to review the Project description provided in this NOP and provide comments on environmental issues related to the statutory responsibilities of the agency. The EIR will be used by SMWD and other Responsible Agencies when considering approval of the Project. Other confirmed participating water providers include Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Suburban Water Systems, and Golden State Water Company.

In accordance with the time limits mandated by CEQA, comments on the NOP must be received by SMWD no later than 30 days after publication of this Notice. We request that comments on this NOP be received no later than March 30, 2011. Please send your comments, including a return address and contact name, via mail to this address:

c/o Tom Barnes, ESA  
626 Wilshire Boulevard, Ste. 1100  
Los Angeles, CA 90017  
Telephone: 213-599-4300  
FAX: 213-599-4301

Or by email to: [cadizproject@esassoc.com](mailto:cadizproject@esassoc.com)

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Public meetings will be held to receive public comments and suggestions on the Project. One scoping meeting will be held in San Bernardino County and a second scoping meeting will be held within SMWD's service area. The scoping meetings will be open to the public on the following dates and in the following locations:

**Wednesday, March 16, 2011, 4 p.m.**  
Santa Margarita Water District  
26111 Antonio Parkway  
Rancho Santa Margarita, CA

**Thursday, March 24, 2011, 6 p.m.**  
Joshua Tree Community Center  
6171 Sunburst Street  
Joshua Tree, CA

#### PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Project proposes active management of the groundwater basin underlying Cadiz Inc. property in the Cadiz and Fenner Valleys located in the eastern Mojave Desert, San Bernardino County, California (Figure 1). The purpose of the Project is to develop a new, reliable water supply and storage facility for SMWD and other participating water providers. The Project would be operated by FMWC, which is comprised of shareholders that are public water systems.

The Project area is located at the confluence of the Fenner Valley and Orange Blossom Watersheds (Watersheds), which span nearly 1,300 square miles and contain an estimated total volume of groundwater in storage of more than 20 MAF. The Project area is underlain by an aquifer system composed of saturated alluvial materials, limestone-carbonates, and granitic rocks with a depth to groundwater of consistently more than 180 feet below ground surface (bgs) and reaching over 400 feet bgs in many areas.

#### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Project would be implemented in two phases:

The first phase, referred to as the **Conservation and Recovery Component**, would employ a strategy to lower water levels beneath Cadiz property in the vicinity of the proposed Project wellfield to establish hydraulic control and intercept groundwater presently migrating to the Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes and being lost to evaporation. Facilities that would be constructed under the first

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phase include a Project wellfield, water conveyance facilities, tie-in to the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA), access roads, and power supply and distribution facilities.

- The second phase, referred to as the **Imported Water Storage Component**, would use the established hydraulic control for the importation, storage and recovery of imported developed water made available from the CRA. Facilities that would be constructed under the second phase include a Project wellfield expansion, extension of the water conveyance facilities, CRA diversion structure and pump station, access roads, expansion of the power supply and distribution facilities, and spreading basins.

#### A. Conservation and Recovery Component

As part of the Conservation and Recovery Component, native groundwater currently being lost annually to evaporation at the Bristol and Cadiz Dry Lakes from the aquifer system underlying the Project area would be captured and conserved through the active management of the groundwater basin. Wells would be constructed within the Fenner Gap portion of the Watersheds to withdraw the amount of groundwater necessary to achieve an optimal level to create a natural hydraulic barrier. The hydraulic barrier would allow for the recovery of groundwater that otherwise would be lost to evaporation. The proposed wells would be constructed on Cadiz property, and a 42-mile underground pipeline would be installed within the privately-owned railroad right-of-way (ROW) that connects the Project wellfield to the CRA. The recovered groundwater would be conveyed to SMWD and other participating water providers through the CRA delivery system owned and operated by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan). The Draft EIR will include a detailed project description showing facility locations and access points. **Figure 2** shows the proposed Project, including the following components:

- wellfield area
  - groundwater wells
  - interconnecting pipelines
  - natural gas distribution system
- 42-mile water conveyance pipeline
- CRA tie-in
- equalization storage reservoir and pump station near CRA (if necessary)

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year without losing the water to evaporation because lowering the water table in the wellfield will also change the gradient and intercept groundwater flowing beneath the surface into the wellfield. Accordingly, the groundwater pumping will act as a barrier to outflow from the groundwater basin into the Dry Lakes where it presently evaporates.

In the event that imported water from the Colorado River is subsequently stored in the Project, the existence of hydraulic control will also allow the imported water to be held in storage for longer periods of time without suffering losses.

The potential quantity and schedule for spreading, storage, and extraction will be explored at the programmatic level in this EIR, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15168 (14 Cal. Code Regs. § 15168.). Further appropriate environmental review would be conducted as required under CEQA and when specific Project participants are identified and express an interest in accessing the storage space. For example, additional information regarding the specific location and design of the proposed wellfield expansion could be necessary to fully evaluate groundwater quality impacts associated with the Imported Water Storage Component.

**PROJECT APPROVALS**

Implementation of the proposed Project will require the following approvals:

- US Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act Section 7
- US Army Corps of Engineers, Clean Water Act Section 404
- California Department of Fish and Game, California Fish and Game Code Section 2081 and California Fish and Game Code Section 1602
- Regional Water Quality Control Board, Clean Water Act Section 401; Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan; Waste Discharge Requirements for spreading basins; and Anti-Degradation Analysis
- Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, Approval to modify CRA and Wheeling Agreement
- Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District, Natural gas engine emissions permits

**PROJECT HISTORY**

In the early 1990s, Cadiz recognized the potential for developing a groundwater storage and transfer project on its properties and partnered with Metropolitan. Metropolitan, as the lead agency, evaluated the feasibility of operating the project, referred to as the "Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-Year Supply Program" (Program). An EIR/EIS (Environmental Impact Statement) was prepared for the Program, which would have involved transporting surplus Colorado River water to the Program site, recharging it

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through a series of recharge basins, storing the water, and then extracting the stored water during times of drought. A pipeline was proposed to be constructed on federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land to convey water from the CRA to the Program site. In August 2002, the United States Department of Interior issued a right-of-way grant for the pipeline.<sup>1</sup> However, although the feasibility studies completed under the partnership demonstrated a significant potential for water supply development, Metropolitan decided not to pursue the Program in October 2002.<sup>2</sup>

Since 2002, Cadiz has continued to pursue partnerships to develop a revised water supply project different than the Program previously contemplated with Metropolitan. Because water supply to Southern California from the State Water Project and Colorado River is often either unreliable or unpredictable, and future costs of supply are uncertain, SMWD and other Southern California water purveyors have partnered with Cadiz to augment their current water supply with the new Project, as proposed.

The new proposed Project is distinct from the prior Program because:

- a) A conservation component has been added to recover native groundwater currently being lost to evaporation, which was not part of the prior Program;
- b) The proposed water conveyance pipeline would be constructed within a privately-owned railroad right-of-way, under a 99-year lease agreement, and not on public lands, as was previously proposed;
- c) End users have been identified as project participants, as opposed to the prior Program, which only identified one public agency. In addition to SMWD, other confirmed Project participants include Three Valleys Municipal Water District, Suburban Water Systems, and Golden State Water Company.
- d) The imported water storage component is not part of the initial project approval. Accordingly, the groundwater extraction facilities have been sized to accommodate the annual variations in the delivery of conserved, recovered and stored indigenous water.

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Record of Decision for California Desert Conservation Area Plan Amendment and Right-of-Way Grant/Temporary Use Permit, August 28, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-Year Supply Program, SCH. No. 9902-1039, Sept. 2001.

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**DISCUSSION OF POTENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

The EIR will address all topics listed in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, regardless of whether the potential impact may be significant, so that information regarding this project is available in a single document to facilitate public review. The content of the EIR will also be subject to input received during the NOP comment period. Where necessary, the EIR will identify mitigation measures to minimize potentially significant impacts of the proposed Project. The EIR will evaluate the following environmental resource issues in addition to CEQA-mandated topics such as cumulative impacts, growth inducement, and Project alternatives:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality and Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology, Soils, Faulting and Seismicity
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology, Water Quality, and Groundwater
- Land Use and Planning
- Population and Housing
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Traffic and Circulation
- Utilities & Service Systems / Water Supply

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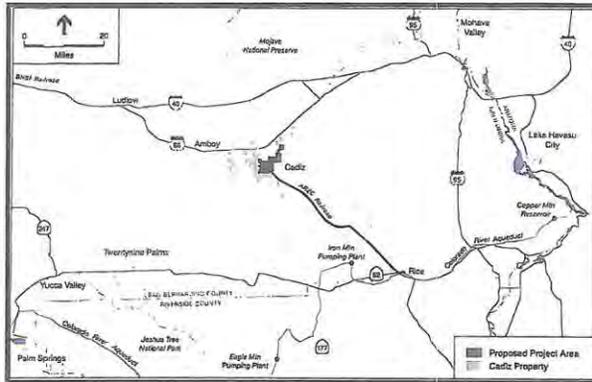
SOURCE: Bing Maps, 2011; ESRI, 2010; DeLorme, 2011; Catz Inc., 2011; and ESA, 2011  
Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project - 2103204  
Figure 1  
Regional Location



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Economic Impact of the Proposed  
**Cadiz Valley**  
Groundwater Conservation, Recovery,  
and Imported Water Storage Project



Final Report

April 18, 2011

John E. Husing, Ph.D.

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**Executive Summary**

Looking at the year by year results, the economic impact of the full Cadiz Groundwater Conservation, Recovery, and Imported Water Storage Project yields the following results over its four year period of design and construction:

Summary of Economic Impacts of Construction Activity, Cadiz Water Project						
Type of Impact	Phase 1 Year 1	Phase 1 Year 2	Phase 2 Year 1	Phase 2 Year 2	4-Year Total	Annual Avg.
Job Creation ( <i>man-years</i> )	1,011	2,090	940	1,945	5,986	1,497
Labor & Proprietorship Income	\$53,416,010	\$115,788,200	\$49,713,909	\$107,763,274	\$326,681,393	\$81,670,348
Economic Activity Generated	\$138,561,308	\$316,207,131	\$126,958,046	\$294,291,784	\$878,018,267	\$219,504,567
State & Local Taxes Generated	\$6,113,696	\$13,537,310	\$5,689,975	\$12,599,082	\$37,940,063	\$9,485,016

Longer term, assuming that the increase in the property valuation equals the construction cost of the Cadiz Water Project's facilities, the increase would be \$536,250,000. This property is inside the Needles Unified School District where the tax rate is \$1.00 per \$100 of valuation for San Bernardino County's government and \$0.1143 for the Needles Unified School District. If the assessed valuation is not increased by an inflation factor, the annual property tax revenue generated in San Bernardino County would total \$6.0 million, including \$5,362,500 to San Bernardino County's government and \$612,934 to the Needles Unified School District.

Permanent Property Tax Revenue Increase			
	San Bdrno Co.	Needles Unified	Total
Assumed Property Valuation	\$536,250,000	\$536,250,000	\$536,250,000
\$100 of Assessed Valuation	\$5,362,500	\$5,362,500	\$5,362,500
Tax Rates Per \$100 of AV	\$1.000	\$0.1143	\$1.1143
Annual Tax Revenue	\$5,362,500	\$612,934	\$5,975,434

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**Economic Impact of the Proposed Cadiz Valley  
Groundwater Conservation, Recovery, and Imported Water Storage Project**

John E. Husing, Ph.D.

**Project.** The project's northern end is located at Cadiz, California, just south of the SR-66 in northeastern San Bernardino County. Its southern end is at Rice, California located along the SR-62 next to the Colorado River Aqueduct. Underlying Cadiz is an aquifer system that lies at the base of the Fenner Valley and Orange Blossom watersheds. This underground "lake" is naturally recharged by rain and snow in the nearby mountains that over time flows underground into it. The aquifer is roughly equivalent in capacity to Lake Mead, the nation's largest surface reservoir. Ultimately, a good deal of water that reaches the aquifer ends up just below ground at Cadiz Dry Lake and Bristol Dry Lake (*below*) where it converges with saline water and evaporates through the surface.



**Phase I. Conservation and Recovery.** In Phase I of the project, facilities would be built near Cadiz to capture and conserve the average annual natural recharge into the aquifer that would otherwise reach the Cadiz Dry Lake and the Bristol Dry Lake and evaporate. Phase I would include the construction of extraction wells that would be used to extract the amount of water that would otherwise flow to the Dry Lakes plus the amount needed to maintain hydraulic control in the well field area.

Phase I would also include the building of a 42-mile underground water pipeline that would transmit water southeast to the Colorado River Aqueduct near Rice. The pipeline would be

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buried along the already disturbed railroad right-of-way along which the Arizona-California Railroad (ARZC) currently operates (see photograph). It would be sized to allow the conveyance of an annual average of 50,000 acre-feet of water. Once the water reaches the Colorado River Aqueduct, it would be conveyed down it into Southern California where it would be made available to the Santa Margarita Water District and other participating water districts.



**Phase I: Timing & Budget.** Once environmental approvals are finalized, Phase I of the project is slated to begin. Planning, design and engineering will occur over a six month period. Construction of the well field, pipeline and power facility is anticipated to take an additional 18 months. The construction budget is estimated as:

• Well Field (20-32 wells)	\$23,500,000
• Pipeline	\$211,500,000
• Power Facilities	\$17,500,000
• Planning, engineering, other overhead	<u>\$25,250,000</u>
• Total Phase I Budget	\$277,750,000

**Phase I: Economic Impact.** The primary impact of a project like the Cadiz Valley Groundwater Conservation & Recovery effort would occur during its construction, not its operational phase. As the project will be built in San Bernardino County, this will be the location of all of the activity. In part, this is because the county has an extensive blue collar labor supply that can build the project. It is also because San Bernardino County is home to production facilities like Ameron International Water Transmission Group and Northwest Pipe Company, leading manufacturers of the materials used in construction wells, pipelines and power plants.

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- It is therefore assumed that 100% of the construction expenditures will be made to workers and suppliers located within San Bernardino County.

**Phase I, Year 1.** In Year 1 of the project, it is assumed that 80% of the planning, engineering and management work on Phase I of the project is completed. Also in Year 1, 25% of construction and the purchase of materials required for it occurs. In addition, it is assumed that 75% of the construction budget for each activity represents construction, while 25% represents materials and supplies. Combined, this places \$83,325,000 of activity into Year 1 (*Exhibit 1*).

Exhibit 1 - Assumptions, Phase I Year 1			
	Period	Share	Year 1
Engineering & Related	80.0%		\$20,200,000
Pipeline Construction	25.0%	75.0%	\$39,666,250
Pipeline Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$13,218,750
Power Plant	25.0%	75.0%	\$3,281,250
Power Plant Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$1,093,750
Well Field	25.0%	75.0%	\$4,406,250
Well Field Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$1,468,750
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$83,325,000</b>
Impact Sectors			
Construction			\$47,343,750
Materials & Supplies			\$15,781,250
Engineering & Related			\$20,200,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$83,325,000</b>

These expenditures are recombined into three broad sectors used by the IMPLAN model to estimate the economic impact on San Bernardino County's economy of these Year 1 expenditures. The IMPLAN model is the standard one used by economists in determining the economic impact of funds coming from the outside world, in this case, the nation's money markets and hitting the local economy through specific types of activities.<sup>1</sup> The model assumes the economy is not operating at full capacity, a realistic assumption given the February 2011 unemployment rate of 13.7% in the county. Those sectors include:

- Construction of other non-residential structures (*Implan Sector #36*)
- Fabricated pipe and pipe fitting manufacturing (*Implan Sector #201*)
- Management, scientific and technical consulting (*Implan Sector #374*)

<sup>1</sup> Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc, Impacts For PLANning, model version 3.0.5.2

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Essentially, what the IMPLAN model does is provide analysts with three types of estimates:

- **Direct.** This is an estimate of the direct effect impact on the local economy of the activity being studied that brings money to the market from the outside world. To use an analogy, this is akin to the money coming to gold miners in the old west who find gold, send it away and bring money to an area that heretofore had no economy.
- **Indirect.** This is made up of activities in local sectors that receive expenditures from the activity being studied in support of it. In the analogy, this would be the general store which sells supplies to the miners. Without the miners, it would not exist. With them, it becomes a viable business.
- **Induced.** This is made up of activities in the local economy that occur simply because money is flowing through it. These activities are not directly or indirectly related to the initial cause of the money coming to the local economy. In the analogy, this would be the saloon that exists because money is being re-spent in the local area by miners and general store workers. The beneficiaries of the induced effects may not even be aware that their success is being caused by the activity being studied.

*Note: During and after World War II, the navy let local tradesman understand how much sailors meant to them by paying them in \$2.00 bills. As these bills changed hands through the local economy, merchants became aware of the induced effect that occurred because a fleet had showed up.*

In Year 1, the activities associated with planning and starting construction on the Conservation and Recovery phase of the Cadiz project will have the impacts shown in Exhibit 2:

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct Effect	593	\$34,328,422	\$83,325,000
Indirect Effect	152	\$7,854,712	\$21,284,424
Induced Effect	266	\$11,432,875	\$33,851,882
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>1,011</b>	<b>\$53,616,010</b>	<b>\$138,561,306</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

- 1,011 full time equivalent jobs would be created in San Bernardino County. Of those, 593 would be working directly on the project either in construction, construction material production or planning and engineering. Another 152 jobs would be created in firms assisting those operations. Firms having essentially no ties to the project would add 266 jobs due to monies flowing generally through the economy.
- \$53.4 million in wages and salaries to workers as well as income to proprietorships in San Bernardino County. \$34.3 million would be to workers or proprietorships working directly on some phase of the project; \$7.7 million would go to workers in firms assisting

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these operations. \$11.4 million would go to workers in unrelated firms benefiting from the general increase in economic activity in the county.

- \$138.6 million in economic activity would be added into San Bernardino County's economy.

In addition, in Year 1 of the project, \$6.1 million in tax revenues that currently do not exist would be created for the state of California and local governments in San Bernardino County (Exhibit 3).

Exhibit 3 - California & Local Taxes Generated, Phase I, Year 1	
Type of Tax	Amount
Dividends	\$ 573,600
Social Ins Tax- Employee Contribution	\$ 75,645
Social Ins Tax- Employer Contribution	\$ 187,893
Indirect Bus Tax: Sales Tax	\$ 1,360,016
Indirect Bus Tax: Property Tax	\$ 1,524,190
Indirect Bus Tax: Motor Vehicle Licenses	\$ 31,206
Indirect Bus Tax: Severance Tax	\$ 524
Indirect Bus Tax: Other Taxes	\$ 267,511
Indirect Bus Tax: State & Local Non-Taxes	\$ 143,364
Corporate Profits Tax	\$ 285,191
Personal Tax: Income Tax	\$ 1,206,212
Personal Tax: Non-Taxes (Fines- Fees)	\$ 363,468
Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License	\$ 55,826
Personal Tax: Property Taxes	\$ 28,388
Personal Tax: Other Tax	\$ 10,862
<b>Total State and Local Tax</b>	<b>\$ 6,113,696</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

**Phase I, Year 2.** In Year 2 of the project, it is assumed that 20% of the planning, engineering and management work on Phase 1 of the project is completed. Also in Year 2, 75% of construction and the purchase of materials required for it occurs. In addition, it is again assumed that 75% of the construction budget for each activity represents construction, while 25% represents materials and supplies. Combined, this places \$194,425,000 of activity into Year 2 (Exhibit 4).

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	Period	Share	Year 2
Engineering & Related	80.0%		\$5,050,000
Pipeline Construction	25.0%	75.0%	\$118,988,750
Pipeline Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$39,666,250
Power Plant	25.0%	75.0%	\$9,843,750
Power Plant Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$3,281,250
Well Field	25.0%	75.0%	\$13,218,750
Well Field Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$4,406,250
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$189,425,000</b>
<b>Impact Sectors</b>			
Construction			\$142,031,250
Materials & Supplies			\$47,343,750
Engineering & Related			\$5,050,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$194,425,000</b>

As before, these expenditures are recombined into three broad sectors used by the IMPLAN model to estimate the economic impact on San Bernardino County's economy of these Year 2 expenditures. It is further assumed that the county's economy will not have fully overcome its 13.7% unemployment rate by Year 2 and be will still be operating at below full capacity:

- Construction of other non-residential structures (*Implan Sector #36*)
- Fabricated pipe and pipe fitting manufacturing (*Implan Sector #201*)
- Management, scientific and technical consulting (*Implan Sector #374*)

Using the IMPLAN model to calculate the direct, indirect and induced impacts of these expenditure yields the following estimates for Year 2 (*Exhibit 5*):

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct Effect	1,197	\$73,830,338	\$194,425,000
Indirect Effect	316	\$17,164,297	\$48,151,836
Induced Effect	577	\$24,793,566	\$73,630,295
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>2,090</b>	<b>\$115,788,200</b>	<b>\$316,207,131</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

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- 2,090 full time equivalent jobs would be created in San Bernardino County. Of those, 1,197 would be working directly on the project either in construction, construction material production or planning and engineering. Another 316 jobs would be created in firms assisting those operations. Firms having essentially no ties to the project would add 577 jobs due to monies flowing generally through the economy.
- \$115.8 million in wages and salaries to workers, as well as income to proprietorships in San Bernardino County. \$73.8 million would be to workers or proprietorships working directly on some phase of the project; \$17.2 million would go to workers in firms assisting these operations. \$24.8 million would go to workers in unrelated firms benefiting from the general increase in economic activity in the county.
- \$316.2 million in economic activity would be added into San Bernardino County's economy.

In addition, the project would create \$13.5 million in tax revenues that currently do not exist for California and San Bernardino County's local governments (*Exhibit 6*):

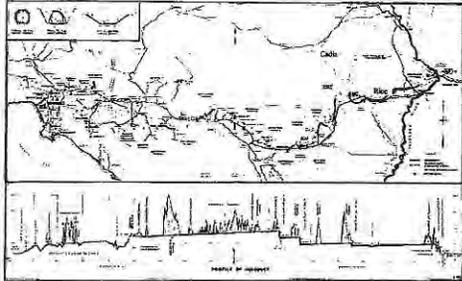
Exhibit 6.-California & Local Taxes Generated, Phase I, Year 2	
Type of Tax	Amount
CA Dividend Taxes	\$ 1,331,795
Social Ins Tax- Employee Contribution	\$ 162,113
Social Ins Tax- Employer Contribution	\$ 402,667
Indirect Bus Tax: Sales Tax	\$ 3,012,145
Indirect Bus Tax: Property Tax	\$ 3,375,756
Indirect Bus Tax: Motor Vehicle Licenses	\$ 69,114
Indirect Bus Tax: Severance Tax	\$ 1,161
Indirect Bus Tax: Other Taxes	\$ 592,481
Indirect Bus Tax: State & Local Non-Taxes	\$ 317,520
Corporate Profits Tax	\$ 662,162
Personal Tax: Income Tax	\$ 2,616,256
Personal Tax: Non-Taxes (Fines- Fees)	\$ 788,358
Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License	\$ 121,086
Personal Tax: Property Taxes	\$ 61,573
Personal Tax: Other Tax	\$ 23,125
<b>Total State and Local Tax</b>	<b>\$ 13,537,310</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

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**Phase II. Imported Water Storage.** In Phase II of the project, imported water from the Colorado River would be sent down the Colorado River Aqueduct (*see map*) to its junction with the Arizona-California Railroad near Rice. There the water would be pump up through a 44 mile pipeline parallel to the pipeline built in Phase I, terminating in recharge basins in the Fenner Valley above Cadiz. There, the water would then be allowed to percolate into the ground and be stored in the underground aquifer until it is needed as a dry-year supply. The total capacity of the storage system is anticipated to be one million acre feet of ground water storage.



Phase II would also include the building of a 42-mile underground water pipeline that would transmit water southeast to the Colorado River Aqueduct near Rice. The pipeline would be buried along the already disturbed railroad right-of-way along which the Arizona-California Railroad (ARZC) currently operates (*see photograph*). It would be sized to allow the conveyance of an annual average of 50,000 acre-feet of water. Once the water reaches the Colorado River Aqueduct, it would be conveyed down it into Southern California where it would be made available to the parties responsible for storing it.

**Phase II: Timing & Budget.** Once environmental approvals are finalized, Phase II of the project is slated to begin. Planning, design and engineering will occur over a six month period. Construction of the second well field and pipeline is anticipated to take an additional 18 months. The power plant needed to raise the water will be the same one constructed in Phase I. The construction budget is estimated as:

• Well Field	\$23,500,000
• Pipeline	\$211,500,000
• Planning, engineering, other overhead	<u>\$25,250,000</u>
• Total Phase II Budget	<u>\$258,500,000</u>

**Phase II: Economic Impact.** Again, the primary impact of a project like the Cadiz Valley Imported Water Storage effort would occur during its construction, not its operational phase. As the project will be built in San Bernardino County, this will be the location of all of its activity. Again, this is because the county has an extensive blue collar labor supply that can build the project. It is also because San Bernardino County is home to the production facilities of leading manufacturers of the materials used in construction wells and pipelines.

- It is therefore assumed that 100% of the construction expenditures will be made to workers and suppliers located within San Bernardino County.

**Phase II Year 1.** In Year 1 of Phase II of the project, it is assumed that 80% of the planning, engineering and management work on Phase II of the project is completed. Also in Year 1 of Phase II, 25% of construction and the purchase of materials required for it occurs. In addition, it is assumed that 75% of the construction budget for each activity represents construction, while 25% represents materials and supplies. Combined, this places \$77,550,000 of activity into Phase II Year 1 (*Exhibit 7*).

	Period	Share	Phase II Year 1
Engineering & Related	80.0%		\$18,800,000
Pipeline Construction	25.0%	75.0%	\$39,656,250
Pipeline Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$13,218,750
Well Field	25.0%	75.0%	\$4,406,250
Well Field Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$1,468,750
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$77,550,000</b>
<b>Impact Sectors</b>			
Construction			\$44,062,500
Materials & Supplies			\$14,687,500
Engineering & Related			\$18,800,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$77,550,000</b>

These expenditures are recombined into three broad sectors used by the IMPLAN model to estimate the economic impact on San Bernardino County's economy of these Phase II Year 1 expenditures. Again, the model assumes the economy continues to not be operating at full capacity given the deep hole from which it must recover, due to the county's February 2011 unemployment rate of 13.7%. Those sectors include:

- Construction of other non-residential structures (*Implan Sector #36*)
- Fabricated pipe and pipe fitting manufacturing (*Implan Sector #201*)
- Management, scientific and technical consulting (*Implan Sector #374*)

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In Phase II Year 1, the activities associated with planning and starting construction on the Imported Water Storage phase of the Cadiz project will have the impacts shown in Exhibit 8:

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct Effect	552	\$31,949,224	\$77,550,000
Indirect Effect	141	\$7,124,188	\$19,809,266
Induced Effect	248	\$10,640,497	\$31,598,780
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>\$49,713,909</b>	<b>\$128,958,046</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

- 940 full time equivalent jobs would be created in San Bernardino County. Of those, 552 would be working directly on the project either in construction, construction material production or planning and engineering. Another 141 jobs would be created in firms assisting those operations. Firms having essentially no ties to the project would add 248 jobs due to monies flowing generally through the economy.
- \$49.7 million in wages and salaries to workers, as well as income to proprietorships in San Bernardino County. \$31.9 million would be to workers or proprietorships working directly on some phase of the project; \$7.1 million would go to workers in firms assisting these operations. \$10.6 million would go to workers in unrelated firms benefiting from the general increase in economic activity in the county.
- \$129.0 million in economic activity would be added into San Bernardino County's economy.

In addition, in Phase II Year 1 of the project, \$5.7 million in tax revenues that currently do not exist would be created for the state of California and local governments in San Bernardino County (*Exhibit 9*).

Type of Tax	Amount
Dividends	\$ 533,845
Social Ins Tax- Employee Contribution	\$ 70,403
Social Ins Tax- Employer Contribution	\$ 174,871
Indirect Bus Tax: Sales Tax	\$1,286,757
Indirect Bus Tax: Property Tax	\$1,418,553
Indirect Bus Tax: Motor Vehicle Lic	\$ 29,043
Indirect Bus Tax: Severance Tax	\$ 488
Indirect Bus Tax: Other Taxes	\$ 248,971
Indirect Bus Tax: State & Local NonTaxes	\$ 133,428

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Corporate Profits Tax	\$ 265,425
Personal Tax: Income Tax	\$1,122,613
Personal Tax: Non-Taxes (Fines- Fees)	\$ 338,277
Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License	\$ 51,957
Personal Tax: Property Taxes	\$ 26,421
Personal Tax: Other Tax	\$ 9,823
<b>Total State and Local Tax</b>	<b>\$5,686,975</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

**Phase II, Year 2.** In Year 2 of Phase II of the project, it is assumed that 20% of the planning, engineering and management work on Phase II of the project is completed. Also in Year 2, 75% of construction and the purchase of materials required for it occurs. In addition, it is again assumed that 75% of the construction budget for each activity represents construction, while 25% represents materials and supplies. Combined, this places \$180,950,000 of activity into Phase II Year 2 (*Exhibit 10*).

Exhibit 10 - Assumptions, Phase II, Year 2			
	Period	Share	Phase II Year 2
Engineering & Related	80.0%		\$4,700,000
Pipeline Construction	25.0%	75.0%	\$118,968,750
Pipeline Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$39,656,250
Well Field	25.0%	75.0%	\$13,218,750
Well Field Supplies	25.0%	25.0%	\$4,406,250
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$180,950,000</b>
Impact Sectors			
Construction			\$132,187,500
Materials & Supplies			\$44,062,500
Engineering & Related			\$4,700,000
<b>Total Expenditures</b>			<b>\$180,950,000</b>

As before, these expenditures are recombined into three broad sectors used by the IMPLAN model to estimate the economic impact on San Bernardino County's economy of these Phase II Year 2 expenditures. It is further assumed that the county's economy will still not have fully overcome its 13.7% unemployment rate by this time and will be operating at below full capacity:

- Construction of other non-residential structures (*Implan Sector #36*)
- Fabricated pipe and pipe fitting manufacturing (*Implan Sector #201*)

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- Management, scientific and technical consulting (*Implan Sector #374*)

Using the IMPLAN model to calculate the direct, indirect and induced impacts of these expenditure yields the following estimates for Phase II, Year 2 (*Exhibit 11*):

Impact Type	Employment	Labor Income	Output
Direct Effect	1,114	\$68,713,383	\$180,950,000
Indirect Effect	294	\$15,974,692	\$44,814,580
Induced Effect	537	\$23,075,199	\$68,527,204
<b>Total Effect</b>	<b>1,945</b>	<b>\$107,763,274</b>	<b>\$294,281,784</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

- 1,945 full time equivalent jobs would be created in San Bernardino County. Of those, 1,114 would be working directly on the project either in construction, construction material production or planning and engineering. Another 294 jobs would be created in firms assisting these operations. Firms having essentially no ties to the project would add 537 jobs due to monies flowing generally through the economy.
- \$107.8 million in wages and salaries to workers, as well as income to proprietorships in San Bernardino County. \$68.7 million would be to workers or proprietorships working directly on some phase of the project; \$16.0 million would go to workers in firms assisting these operations. \$23.1 million would go to workers in unrelated firms benefiting from the general increase in economic activity in the county.
- \$294.3 million in economic activity would be added into San Bernardino County's economy.

In addition, the project would create \$12.6 million in tax revenues that currently do not exist for California and San Bernardino County's local governments (*Exhibit 12*):

Type of Tax	Amount
Dividends	\$ 1,239,492
Social Ins Tax- Employee Contribution	\$ 150,877
Social Ins Tax- Employer Contribution	\$ 374,759
Indirect Bus Tax: Sales Tax	\$ 2,803,383
Indirect Bus Tax: Property Tax	\$ 3,141,793
Indirect Bus Tax: Motor Vehicle Lic	\$ 64,324
Indirect Bus Tax: Severance Tax	\$ 1,080
Indirect Bus Tax: Other Taxes	\$ 551,418
Indirect Bus Tax: S/L NonTaxes	\$ 295,514
Corporate Profits Tax	\$ 616,270
Personal Tax: Income Tax	\$ 2,434,991
Personal Tax: Non-Taxes (Fines- Fees)	\$ 733,716
Personal Tax: Motor Vehicle License	\$ 112,694

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Personal Tax: Property Taxes	\$ 57,306
Personal Tax: Other Tax (like Fish/Hunt)	\$ 21,523
<b>Total State and Local Tax</b>	<b>\$12,599,082</b>

Source: Output from IMPLAN model for San Bernardino County, 2011

**Summary.** Looking at the year by year results, the economic impact of the full Cadiz Groundwater Conservation, Recovery, and Imported Water Storage Project yields the following results over its four year period:

Type of Impact	Phase I, Year 1	Phase I, Year 2	Phase II, Year 1	Phase II, Year 2	4-Year Total	Annual Avg.
Job Creation (man-years)	1,011	2,090	940	1,945	5,986	1,497
Labor & Proprietorship Income	\$53,416,010	\$115,788,200	\$49,713,909	\$107,763,274	\$326,681,393	\$81,670,348
Economic Activity Generated	\$138,561,306	\$316,207,131	\$128,958,046	\$294,281,784	\$878,018,267	\$219,504,567
State & Local Taxes Generated	\$6,113,696	\$13,637,310	\$6,689,975	\$12,599,082	\$37,940,063	\$9,485,016

Note that the annual average employment over this period would be 1,497 full time equivalent jobs. Altogether, the project would generate \$326.7 million in income to workers and single proprietors, an average of \$81.7 million per year. The economic activity added into San Bernardino County's economy over the four years would total \$878.0 million, or \$219.5 million per year. State and local taxes generated would total \$37.9 million, or \$9.5 million per year.

Looking longer term, the result of construction of the full Cadiz Water Project would be to increase the assessed valuation of property in the Cadiz area, as well as along the Arizona-California Railroad right of way and in the area where the pipelines would interact with the Colorado River Aqueduct near Rice. If it is assumed that the increase in the property valuation would be equal to the construction cost of the facilities, the increase would be \$536,250,000. All of this property is in unincorporated areas of the Needles Unified School District, where the tax rate is \$1.00 per \$100 of valuation for San Bernardino County's government and \$0.1143 for the Needles Unified School District.

If assessed valuation is not increased by an inflation factor, the annual property tax revenue generated by the Cadiz Water Project within San Bernardino County would total \$6.0 million. This would include \$5,362,000 to San Bernardino County and \$612,934 to Needles Unified School District (*Exhibit 14*).

	San Bernardino Co.	Needles Unified	Total
Assumed Property Valuation	\$536,250,000	\$536,250,000	\$536,250,000
\$100 of Assessed Valuation	\$5,362,500	\$5,362,500	\$5,362,500
Tax Rates Per \$100 of AV	\$1	\$0.1143	\$1.1143
<b>Annual Tax Revenue</b>	<b>\$5,362,500</b>	<b>\$612,934</b>	<b>\$5,975,434</b>

Source: San Bernardino County Auditor-Comptroller's Office, Tax Rates June 30, 2010



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Comment ID: N-18664  
Date Received: May 27, 2011



CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

protecting and restoring natural ecosystems and imperiled species through  
science, education, policy, and environmental law

Submitted via Website, Electronically and by Fed Ex

May 26, 2011

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**RE: Comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA (76 FR 10584)**

To whom it concerns:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity's 320,000 staff, members and on-line activists throughout the western states, regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA (76 FR 10584), issued by the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA

As proposed, the preferred alternative (Alternative 6) would expand military training into 21,304 acres in the southern expansion area, 146,667 acres in the western expansion of which 38,137 acres would be shared intermittently with off-road vehicle enthusiasts and the remaining 108,530 acres would be used exclusively by the Marine Corps for a total expansion area of 167,971 acres. These Mojave desert lands provide habitat for many species including the threatened desert tortoise. The DEIS for the proposed expansion fails to provide adequate identification and analysis of all of the significant impacts of the proposed project on the desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and other rare plants, animals and vegetation communities including all Unusual Plant Assemblages (UPAs), and other biological resources. The DEIS also fails to adequately address the significant cumulative impacts of the project; fails to present a clear need for the expansion and lacks consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives.

Of particular concern is the DEIS' failure to include adequate information regarding the impacts to resources and the failure to fully examine the impact of the proposed expansion along with proposed plan amendments to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan from other projects that cumulatively will result in military and industrial areas sprawling across the

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California Desert within habitat that should be protected to achieve the goals of bioregional plans and endangered species recovery.

In the sections that follow, the Center provides detailed comments on the ways in which the DEIS fails to adequately identify and analyze many of the impacts that could result from the proposed expansion, including but not limited to: impacts to biological resources, direct and indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts.

**I. The DEIS Fails to Comply with NEPA.**

NEPA is the “basic charter for protection of the environment,” 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(a). In NEPA, Congress declared a national policy of “creat[ing] and maintain[ing] conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony.” *Or. Natural Desert Ass’n v. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 531 F.3d 1114, 1120 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting 42 U.S.C. § 4331(a)). NEPA is intended to “ensure that [federal agencies] ... will have detailed information concerning significant environmental impacts” and “guarantee[] that the relevant information will be made available to the larger [public] audience.” *Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project v. Blackwood*, 161 F.3d 1208, 1212 (9th Cir. 1998).

Under NEPA, before a federal agency takes a “major [f]ederal action[] significantly affecting the quality of the environment,” the agency must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). *Kern v. U.S. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 284 F.3d 1062, 1067 (9th Cir. 2002) (quoting 43 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C)). “An EIS is a thorough analysis of the potential environmental impact that ‘provide[s] full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and ... inform[s] decisionmakers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment.’” *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 387 F.3d 989, 993 (9th Cir. 2004) (citing 40 C.F.R. § 1502.1). An EIS is NEPA’s “chief tool” and is “designed as an ‘action-forcing device to [e]nsure that the policies and goals defined in the Act are infused into the ongoing programs and actions of the Federal Government.’” *Or. Natural Desert Ass’n*, 531 F.3d at 1121 (quoting 40 C.F.R. § 1502.1).

An EIS must identify and analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action. This requires more than “general statements about possible effects and some risk” or simply conclusory statements regarding the impacts of a project. *Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995 (9th Cir. 2004) (citation omitted); *Oregon Natural Resources Council v. BLM*, 470 F.3d 818, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2006). Conclusory statements alone “do not equip a decisionmaker to make an informed decision about alternative courses of action or a court to review the Secretary’s reasoning.” *NRDC v. Hodel*, 865 F.2d 288, 298 (D.C. Cir. 1988).

NEPA also requires the DEIS to ensure the scientific integrity and accuracy of the information used in its decision-making. 40 CFR § 1502.24. The regulations specify that the agency “must insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. The information must be of high quality. Accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential.”

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40C.F.R. §1500.1(b). Where there is incomplete information that is relevant to the reasonably foreseeable impacts of a project and essential for a reasoned choice among alternatives, the Marines must obtain that information unless the costs of doing so would be exorbitant or the means of obtaining the information are unknown. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22. If the costs are reasonable to obtain information needed to complete the analysis and the DEIS must provide additional information—through a supplement or revised EIS. Even in those instances where complete data is unavailable, the EIS also must contain an analysis of the worst-case scenario resulting from the proposed project. *Friends of Endangered Species v. Jantzen*, 760 F.3d 976, 988 (9th Cir. 1985) (NEPA requires a worst case analysis when information relevant to impacts is essential and not known and the costs of obtaining the information are exorbitant or the means of obtaining it are not known) citing *Save our Ecosystems v. Clark*, 747 F.2d 1240, 1243 (9th Cir. 1984); 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22.

*A. Purpose And Need and Project Description are Too Narrowly Construed and Unlawfully Segment the Analysis*

Agencies cannot narrow the purpose and need statement to fit only the proposed project and then shape their findings to approve that project without a “hard look” at the environmental consequences. To do so would allow an agency to circumvent environmental laws by simply “going-through-the-motions.” It is well established that NEPA review cannot be “used to rationalize or justify decisions already made.” 40 C.F.R. § 1502.5; *Metcalf v. Daley*, 214 F.3d 1135, 1141-42 (9th Cir. 2000) (“the comprehensive ‘hard look’ mandated by Congress and required by the statute must be timely, and it must be taken objectively and in good faith, not as an exercise in form over substance, and not as a subterfuge designed to rationalize a decision already made.”) As Ninth Circuit noted an “agency cannot define its objectives in unreasonably narrow terms.” *City of Carmel-by-the-Sea v. U.S. Dept. of Transportation*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1155 (9th Cir. 1997); *Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F. 3d 900, 812 (9th Cir. 1999). The statement of purpose and alternatives are closely linked since “the stated goal of a project necessarily dictates the range of ‘reasonable’ alternatives.” *City of Carmel*, 123 F.3d at 1155. The Ninth Circuit recently reaffirmed this point in *National Parks Conservation Assn v. BLM*, 586 F.3d 735, 746-48 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that “[a]s a result of [an] unreasonably narrow purpose and need statement, the BLM necessarily considered an unreasonably narrow range of alternatives” in violation of NEPA).

The purpose behind the requirement that the purpose and need statement not be unreasonably narrow, and NEPA in general is, in large part, to “guarantee[ ] that the relevant information will be made available to the larger audience that may also play a role in both the decision-making process and the implementation of that decision.” *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 349 (1989). The agency cannot camouflage its analysis or avoid robust public input, because “the very purpose of a draft and the ensuing comment period is to elicit suggestions and criticisms to enhance the proposed project.” *City of Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 123 F.3d at 1156. The agency cannot circumvent relevant public input by narrowing the purpose and need so that no alternatives can be meaningfully explored or by failing to review a reasonable range of alternatives.

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The DEIS' purpose and need for the proposed expansion is "to fulfill the Marine Corps' requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized MAGTFs... MEBs must be able to conduct maneuver-intensive operations over extended distances, supported by closely coordinated precision fires, aviation-delivered ordnance, and sustained, focused logistical support... The Marine Corps needs the proposed action because existing facilities, ranges, and live-fire ground and air maneuver areas are inadequate to support the requirement for MEB-sized training exercises." (DEIS at 1-4). The DEIS' purpose and need is very narrowly construed to the proposed expansion areas. The purpose and need provided in the DEIS is impermissibly narrow under NEPA for several reasons, most importantly because it forecloses meaningful alternatives review in the DEIS. Because the purpose and need and the alternatives analysis are at the "heart" of NEPA review and affect nearly all other aspects of the EIS, on this basis and others, agency must revise and re-circulate the DEIS.

NEPA-1

**B. The DEIS Does Not Adequately Describe Environmental Baseline**

DEIS is required to "describe the environment of the areas to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration." 40 CFR § 1502.15. The establishment of the baseline conditions of the affected environment is a practical requirement of the NEPA process. In *Half Moon Bay Fisherman's Marketing Ass'n v. Carlucci*, 857 F.2d 505, 510 (9th Cir. 1988), the Ninth Circuit states that "without establishing . . . baseline conditions . . . there is simply no way to determine what effect [an action] will have on the environment, and consequently, no way to comply with NEPA." Similarly, without a clear understanding of the current status of these public lands BLM cannot make a rational decision regarding proposed project. See *Center for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, et al.*, 422 F. Supp. 2d 1115, 1166-68 (N.D. Cal. 2006) (holding that it was arbitrary and capricious for BLM to approve a project based on outdated and inaccurate information regarding biological resources found on public lands).

The DEIS fails to provide adequate baseline information and description of the environmental setting in many areas including in particular the status of rare plants, animals and communities including desert tortoise, golden eagles, rare plants, and sand transport corridors.

The baseline descriptions in the DEIS are inadequate particularly for the areas where surveys were a single season, a day, or not performed at all. As discussed below, because of the deficiencies of the baseline data for the proposed project area, the DEIS fails to adequately describe the environmental baseline. Many of the rare and common but essential species and habitats have incomplete and/or vague on-site descriptions that make determining the proposed project's impacts difficult at best. Some of the rare species/habitats baseline conditions are totally absent and as a result no impact assessment is provided either. A supplemental document is required to fully identify the baseline conditions of the site, and that baseline needs to be used to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project.

BIO-1

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**NEPA-1:**

Paragraph 1.3.1 on page 1-4 of the EIS states the purpose and need for the proposed action. This text makes no reference to the proposed expansion areas, and only peripherally refers to the Combat Center as an example of the Marine Corps' largest training site. The purpose and need statement therefore does not foreclose consideration of meaningful alternatives to the proposed expansion areas; on the contrary, as described in Section 2.7, numerous alternatives were considered in addition to the six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative that were carried forward for analysis in the EIS (Section 2.4). How the purpose and need relates to the analysis of alternatives is addressed in Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.7 of the EIS.

**BIO-1:**

In accordance with the CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1502.2(b) and 40 CFR 1502.15, the EIS succinctly describes the environmental conditions of areas potentially affected by the alternatives, and focuses on resources with the potential for significant impact as determined during scoping and in consultation with cooperating and regulating agencies. To support the EIS analysis, the USMC used a variety of methods to develop baseline data, including requesting wildlife and plant inventory data from the BLM. Detailed surveys were conducted for the EIS including: 1) tortoise abundance and density; 2) abundance of the Mojave fringe-toed lizard, burrowing owl, Mojave ground squirrel, and chuckwalla; 3) distribution and abundance of all sensitive plant species; and 4) occurrence of special status aquatic invertebrate species. The EIS contains the best available information on the occurrence and distribution of species within the study areas.

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C. Failure to Identify and Analyze Direct and Indirect Impacts to Biological Resources

The EIS fails to adequately analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project on the environment. The Ninth Circuit has made clear that NEPA requires agencies to take a “hard look” at the effects of proposed actions; a cursory review of environmental impacts will not stand. *Idaho Sporting Congress v. Thomas*, 137 F.3d 1146, 1150-52, 1154 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998). Where the DEIS has incomplete or insufficient information, NEPA requires the agency to do the necessary work to obtain it where possible. 40 C.F.R. §1502.22; see *National Parks & Conservation Ass’n v. Babbitt*, 241 F.3d 722, 733 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2001) (“lack of knowledge does not excuse the preparation of an EIS; rather it requires [the agency] to do the necessary work to obtain it.”)

Moreover, the DEIS must look at reasonable mitigation measures to avoid impacts but failed to do so here. Even in those cases where the extent of impacts may be somewhat uncertain due to the complexity of the issues, the DEIS is not relieved of its responsibility under NEPA to discuss mitigation of reasonably likely impacts at the outset. Even if the discussion may of necessity be tentative or contingent, NEPA requires that the DEIS provide some information regarding whether significant impacts could be avoided. *South Fork Band Council of Western Shoshone v. DOI*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2009).

The lack of comprehensive surveys is particularly problematic (DEIS at 4.10-2). Failure to conduct sufficient surveys prior to the implementation of the project also effectively eliminates the most important function of surveys - using the information from the surveys to avoid and minimize harm caused by the project and reduce the need for mitigation. Often efforts to mitigate harm are far less effective than avoiding and preventing the harm in the first place. In addition, without understanding the scope of harm before it occurs, it is difficult to quantify an appropriate amount and type of mitigation.

The DEIS fails to provide all of the information necessary for decisionmakers and the public to adequately review the proposed project. Therefore the impacts cannot be fully analyzed or mitigated appropriately or fully. For this reason alone, a supplemental or revised DEIS needs to be provided and additional alternatives are included (including a preferred alternative) that avoids and reduces the impacts to biological resources.

With regards to transplantation and relocation, the ISA state that “In general, moving organisms from one area to another—for example, out of an impact area into a reserve area—is not a successful conservation action and may do more harm than good to conserved populations by spreading diseases, stressing resident animals, increasing mortality, and decreasing reproduction and genetic diversity. Transplantation or translocations should be considered a last recourse for unavoidable impacts, should never be considered full mitigation for the impact, and in all cases must be treated as experiments subject to long-term monitoring and management.” (at pg. Vii – Executive Summary). Clearly the DEIS fails to consider the impacts of moving both plants and animals from the project site onto adjacent areas. As discussed below the DEIS fails to evaluate the impacts of any of the translocated species on resident species and habitat – at

BIO-2

BIO-3

Response to Comment N-18664 (Page 5 of 20):

BIO-1 Continued:

The Draft EIS presents a discussion of impacts to all sensitive plant and wildlife species known to be present in the proposed action area. Impacts to the desert tortoise are given appropriate prominence in the impact analysis, as it is the only resident species listed under the Federal ESA. Tortoise surveys are currently being conducted at the Combat Center as directed under the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and the Basewide Biological Opinion; however, the results of these surveys will not be available until 2012 and thus could not be included in the EIS.

BIO-2:

Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, Comment number BIO-2 regarding the surveys utilized in the Draft EIS. Additional mitigation measures, developed during the Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation process with USFWS, have been included in the Final EIS. These include dedication of new Special Use Areas, expansion of monitoring and tortoise “headstarting” programs, and preparation of a detailed translocation plan to reduce the significant impacts to the desert tortoise. Survey and monitoring efforts are best considered as adaptive management projects, where monitoring must be detailed and the results quickly analyzed in order to inform near-term future efforts. Such adaptive management would be a keystone of the headstarting program and detailed translocation plan which would be prepared for the proposed action. In no event would surveys and monitoring be considered full mitigation for the impacts to the desert tortoise, which would remain significant after all currently proposed conservation and mitigation measures.

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a minimum carrying capacity (the ability of the habitat to support species) of the landscape where species area proposed to be moved needs to be included

BIO-3

I. Desert Tortoise

The desert tortoise has lived in the western deserts for tens of thousands of years. In the 1970's their populations were noted to decline. Subsequently, the species was listed as threatened by the State of California in 1989 and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990, which then issued a Recovery Plan for the tortoise in 1994. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of updating the Recovery Plan, and a Draft Updated Recovery Plan was issued in 2008, however it has not been finalized to date. Current data indicate a continued decline across the range of the listed species' despite its protected status and recovery actions.

The original and draft Updated Recovery Plans both recognize uniqueness in desert tortoise populations in California. This particular subpopulation of tortoise at the proposed project site is part of the West Mojave Recovery unit<sup>1</sup>. Recent population genetics studies<sup>2</sup> have added to the 1994 Recovery Plan conclusions – not only is the West Mojave Recovery unit unique, within it, there are further genetically unique populations that may indeed require recognition of additional recovery unit subdivisions in the larger West Mojave Recovery Unit. While the proposed project site may have varying desert tortoise densities, this particular recovery unit has also been documented to have a 23% decline in population between 2005 and 2007<sup>3</sup>. The DEIS fails to identify and consider the localized impact from the proposed action in this recovery unit that is already in steep decline.

Currently, up to approximately 3,000 desert tortoises have been estimated to live within the boundaries of the preferred alternative's expansion areas (DEIS at 4.10-47). The DEIS states that the preferred alternative would "result in the take from military training (through death or being moved out of harm's way) of between 154 and 714 adult tortoises over the life of the project (121 to 189 in the acquisition study areas)" (DEIS at 4.10-47). However the assumptions (see below discussion) are so unclear that the proposed estimates appear to be speculative at best. It also fails to take into account "take" for juveniles and eggs, despite the fact that these life stages are essential for preventing further declines in desert tortoise populations. These life stages have been estimated for other proposed projects and should be included in the evaluation of impacts to the desert tortoise, because they most certainly will be affected by the proposed project. Regardless, we agree with the DEIS in the determination that the impact to the federally threatened desert tortoise from the preferred Alternative 6 is significant (DEIS at 4.10-49)

BIO-4

1 [http://www.fws.gov/seraids/desert\\_tortoise/documents/2007\\_Recovery\\_Plan\\_Desert\\_Tortoise\\_Population\\_Management.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/seraids/desert_tortoise/documents/2007_Recovery_Plan_Desert_Tortoise_Population_Management.pdf)  
 2 <http://www.zsl.gov.uk/assets/conservation/2008/194494602E.pdf>  
 3 Murphy et al. 2007  
 4 [http://www.fws.gov/seraids/desert\\_tortoise/documents/2007\\_Recovery\\_Plan\\_Desert\\_Tortoise\\_Population\\_Management.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/seraids/desert_tortoise/documents/2007_Recovery_Plan_Desert_Tortoise_Population_Management.pdf)  
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BIO-3:

Because translocation was not formally proposed as mitigation when the Draft EIS was released, the secondary impacts of translocation were not described. Translocation efforts are best considered as adaptive management projects, where monitoring must be detailed and the results quickly analyzed in order to inform near-term future efforts. Such adaptive management would be a keystone of the detailed translocation plan which would be prepared for the proposed action. In no event would translocation be considered full mitigation for the impacts to the desert tortoise, which would remain significant after all currently proposed conservation and mitigation measures.

BIO-4:

Based on discussions with USFWS during Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation, the proportional take (i.e., 50% in high-intensity disturbance areas, 10% in medium-intensity disturbance areas) has been removed from the analysis, and all tortoises located within these areas are predicted to be "taken" in some manner, whether by translocation, handling, harassment, injury or death. In addition, calculations of juvenile populations and number of potentially impacted juveniles have been estimated for the proposed action and alternatives using a life table analysis.

BIO-5:

The Biological Assessment was revised based on USFWS consultation. The Biological Opinion is included in the Final EIS as Appendix O.

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While the DEIS references the Biological Assessment for the desert tortoise that includes the potential adverse effects and provides the web link to it (DEIS at 3.10-2), we could not find the Biological Assessment on the site.

BIO-5

The DEIS inappropriately assigns “take” percentage for desert tortoise based on the intensity of disturbance. For example “take” in the “high intensity areas” is presumed to be 50% (DEIS at 4.10-3). It is unclear what this assumption is based on (documented mortality from on-base research?) Additionally, the interval for the “take” is unclear and consequential – is that 50% per year? Over the life of the project? For each military training event? These basic issues need to be clarified in a supplemental EIS.

BIO-6

The DEIS fails to provide any actual mitigation strategy for impacts to desert tortoise. Because the action will be impacting occupied desert tortoise habitat and “take” will occur of desert tortoise, the agency needs to identify the amount and location of desert tortoise habitat that will be acquired and preserved in perpetuity as mitigation for the impacts that will occur to the desert tortoise within the expansion areas. This strategy has been implemented by other Department of Defense expansions and is requisite for this project. In addition to acquisition, other strategies that benefit the conservation of desert tortoise should also be implemented as identified in the current Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan<sup>5</sup> (1994). The DEIS is woefully inadequate with regards to this aspect of desert tortoise impact and mitigation. The supplemental DEIS must include these important issues.

BIO-7

Mitigation acquisition should include appropriate tortoise habitat (occupied or unoccupied) which is currently existing and providing benefits to the species, to off-set the elimination of the proposed expansion area. However, this strategy is still a *net loss of habitat* to the desert tortoise, as currently they are using or could use both the mitigation site and the proposed expansion area. Therefore, in order to aid in recovery of this declining species, at a minimum a 5:1 mitigation ratio should be required as mitigation for the elimination of occupied desert tortoise habitat in the proposed expansion area.<sup>6</sup>

BIO-8

The DEIS also fails to evaluate the potential off-site impacts to desert tortoise that will result from the proposed expansion displacing off-road vehicle (ORV) from the Johnson Valley open area. It is likely that ORV use will be concentrated in the remaining Johnson Valley ORV area (or other nearby ORV open areas) further impacting the existing desert tortoise populations in those areas. Recognition of the increase in illegal ORV activities must also be considered. The agency could offset some of the impact by providing SIGNIFICANTLY increased law enforcement resources to land management agencies in the region to help enforce land management rules and regulations especially in Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) and wilderness areas, which are key in recovering desert tortoise populations. This type of “mitigation” has been implemented by the Fort Irwin Expansion, where additional law enforcement was provided to the BLM. In that case however, the expansion was not in an ORV open area. In this case, significantly more law enforcement resources would be necessary to control potential illegal uses in adjacent sensitive areas.

BIO-9

<sup>5</sup> [http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery\\_plans/1994/940628.pdf](http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plans/1994/940628.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Moilanen et al 2009, Norton 2008

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**BIO-6:**

Please refer to response to Comment BIO-4 above regarding proportional take. Regarding the duration of impacts, the text on page 4.10-3 of the Draft EIS correctly describes that impacts as described would occur over the lifetime of the project, which for the purposes of analysis has been determined to be 50 years. Refer to response to comment letter N-18732, comment number BIO-2 for a description of how the Marine Corps arrived at the 50-year project lifetime.

**BIO-7:**

A suite of mitigation measures being developed with USFWS, such as a translocation plan, designation of new Special Use Areas, etc. are described in more detail in the Final EIS and would be expected to reduce the take of tortoises, though not to a level of less than significant.

**BIO-8:**

Mitigation for impacts to the desert tortoise is being identified through Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with USFWS, and may include purchase of offsite lands or other offsite measures such as funding of conservation law enforcement.

**BIO-9:**

Additional discussion regarding the impacts of displaced OHV activity and intensified OHV activity (within the reduced Johnson Valley OHVA) has been provided in the Final EIS. Refer to Sections 4.10.3.1, 4.10.4.1, 4.10.6.1, 4.10.7.1, 4.10.8.1, and 4.10.9.1 for the additional text.

**BIO-10:**

Relocation of desert tortoises as described in the Draft EIS refers to what is current practice on the Combat Center: moving tortoises a short distance (~100 meters or less) out of harm’s way, for instance off of a roadway. However, please refer to response to Comment BIO-3 above regarding preparation of a translocation plan in consultation with USFWS.

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The DEIS fails to provide details on relocation of desert tortoise “out of harm’s way”. Typically a translocation and relocation plan is provided for public review, but it is missing from the DEIS. Recently a panel of Independent Science Advisors (ISA) was convened to make recommendations<sup>7</sup> for species conservation as part of the proposed Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The ISA state that “In general, moving organisms from one area to another—for example, out of an impact area into a reserve area—is not a successful conservation action and may do more harm than good to conserved populations by spreading diseases, stressing resident animals, increasing mortality, and decreasing reproduction and genetic diversity. Transplantation or translocations should be considered a last recourse for unavoidable impacts, should never be considered full mitigation for the impact, and in all cases must be treated as experiments subject to long-term monitoring and management. Additionally the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also recognizes that moving desert tortoise is “fraught with long-term uncertainties”<sup>8</sup>. Recent desert tortoise translocations have resulted in significant short-term mortality of 45% or greater<sup>9</sup> and unknown long-term survivorship. The EIS needs to clarify the definition of translocation and relocation. It needs to clarify how far desert tortoise are planned to be moved, where they will be moved, the condition of the host population, and assure that the site will be conserved in perpetuity to prevent subsequent relocation/translocation of desert tortoise. As per the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan, relocations/translocations should not occur into DWMA’s.

BIO-10

The Center has repeatedly sought stronger protections for desert tortoise and tortoise critical habitat both in the DWMA’s and in other areas within the CDCA as a whole and particularly within the western Mojave desert. Despite the fact that desert tortoise populations in the west Mojave DWMA’s continue to decline, further degradation is proposed not only by this proposed expansion but by other related activities including displaced ORV activities, which could affect DWMA’s, which were established for desert tortoise recovery (not just survival).

BIO-11

2. Sand Transport System

The DEIS fails to consider the impacts that the proposed expansion area has on the sand transport system in the region<sup>10</sup>. The site need not have active dunes on it to be an integral part of the sand transport corridor and overall eolian system. The impacts of the proposed project to the sand transport corridor, and the sand dune habitat which supports the Mojave fringe-toed lizard could be significant and that analysis must be done in a revised or supplemental DEIS.

BIO-12

3. Rare and Special Status Plants and Communities

The DEIS fails to identify if any rare plant surveys were done within the expansion areas. These types of surveys need to be performed, not only for spring flowering rare plants but also for the suite of rare plant species that are triggered by summer monsoonal rains and bloom in the

BIO-13

7 <http://www.energyc.ca.gov/2010publications/DRECP-1000-2010-008/DRECP-1000-2010-008-F.PDF>  
 8 [http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert\\_tortoise/documents/sac20090313\\_SAC\\_meeting\\_summary.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/documents/sac20090313_SAC_meeting_summary.pdf)  
 9 Gowan and Berry 2009.  
 10 Muhs et al. 2003

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**BIO-11:**

Comment noted.

**BIO-12:**

Comment noted. Additional information regarding sand transport in the action area and cumulative effects of the proposed action has been provided in Section 5.4.10 of the Final EIS.

**BIO-13:**

As noted in Table 3.10-1, rare plant surveys were conducted for the west, south and east study areas. The results of these surveys are discussed throughout Section 3.10 and form the basis of impact discussions in Section 4.10.

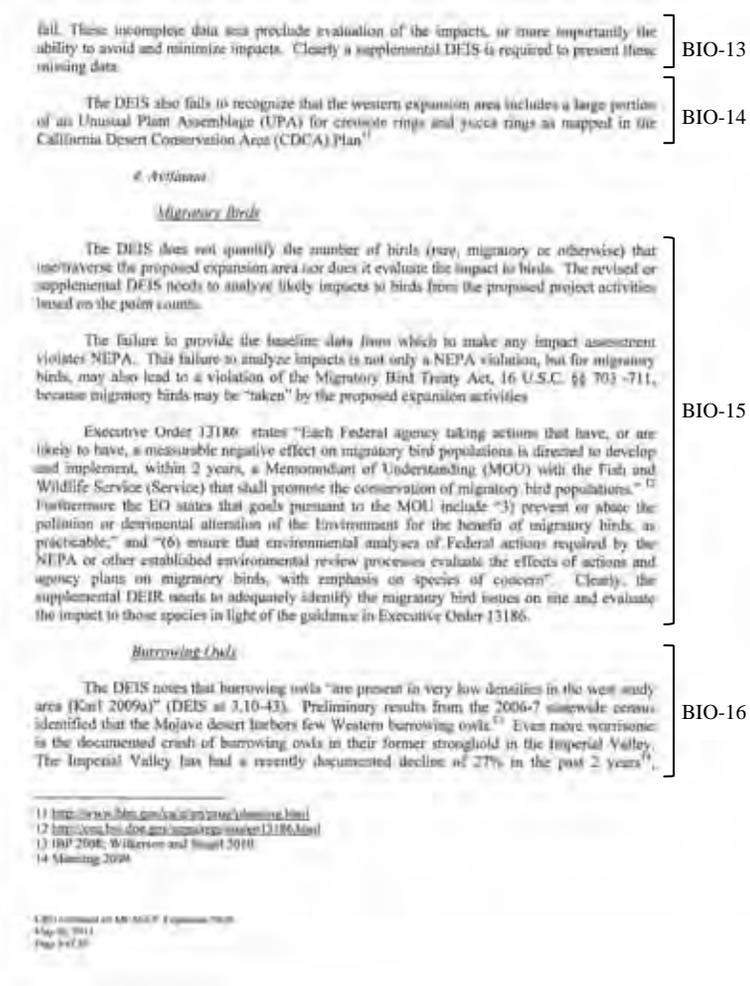
**BIO-14:**

Discussion of the creosote ring UPAs and yucca ring UPAs located within the action area is provided in Section 3.10.3.3 of the Draft and Final EIS.

**BIO-15:**

Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment BIO-1 regarding impacts to migratory birds. Limited information was available regarding migratory bird use of the study areas, but usage is expected to be very low due to the lack of permanent (or even extended duration temporary) water sources. Compliance with Executive Order 13186 will be pursued in the event that the proposed action is approved. In addition, in accordance with the Migratory Bird Rule for military readiness activities, devising migratory bird conservation measures is only needed if significant population-level impacts are expected to occur. This type of impacts is not expected for the proposed action.

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**BIO-16:**

The proposed action may result in adverse effects to a limited number of burrowing owls in the acquisition areas. The Combat Center Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan includes conservation measures that will greatly minimize these adverse effects. As stated in Section 4.10.7.2, Special Use Areas would provide disturbance-free habitat for desert vegetation and wildlife. In addition, impacts across the training area would be minimized (a type of mitigation) by maintaining the same training footprint for each exercise.

**BIO-17:**

Comment noted. However, golden eagles that may be present in study areas, especially the west study area, are already exposed to substantial human visitation. Although this may increase somewhat in some areas under the proposed action, other areas may experience less visitation that at present due to access restrictions. If nesting pairs of golden eagles are discovered in the potential disturbance areas, the Marine Corps would be expected to prepare and implement an Avian and Bat Protection Plan to avoid violation Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Golden eagle surveys in the action area have been funded and would be conducted in order to inform the preparation of an Avian and Bat Protection Plan.

**BIO-18:**

Comment noted. Information regarding the presence or potential presence of badgers in the action area has been added to Section 3.10, and potential less than significant impacts are now described in Section 4.10.

**BIO-19:**

Information regarding the presence or potential presence of desert kit foxes in the proposed action area has been added to Section 3.10, and potential less than significant impacts are now described in Section 4.10.

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resulting in an even more dire state for burrowing owls in California. Because burrowing owls are in decline throughout California, and now their “stronghold” is documented to be declining severely, the burrowing owls in this proposed expansion area become even more important to species conservation efforts. The recirculated or supplemental DEIS needs to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project on this regional distribution of owls.

While habitat acquisition specifically for burrowing owls needs to be identified in the DEIS. Mean burrowing owl foraging territories are 242 hectares in size, although foraging territories for owl in heavily cultivated areas is only 35 hectares<sup>15</sup>. Regardless, the acquisition of mitigation acreage should include adequate foraging area. Using the average foraging territory size for mitigation calculations may not accurately predict the carrying capacity and may *overestimate* the carrying capacity of the proposed expansion area – it may be that in this area of the Mojave desert 4,000+ acres is necessary to support 4 burrowing owls. Carrying capacity is tied to habitat quality, so language should be included that mitigation lands that are acquired for burrowing owl be native habitats on undisturbed lands, not cultivated lands, which are subject to the whims of land use changes. The long-term persistence of burrowing owls lie in their ability to utilize natural landscapes, not human-created ones.

While “passive relocation” may minimize immediate direct take of burrowing owls, ultimately the burrowing owls’ available habitat is reduced, and “relocated” birds are forced to compete for resources with other resident burrowing owls and may move into less suitable habitat, ultimately resulting in “take”.

Golden Eagle

The DEIS fails to identify if golden eagles occur on the expansion areas. The lack of basic baseline data precludes the ability to identify or analyze potential impacts to golden eagles from the proposed expansion activities. One fact is clear - significant amounts of foraging habitat will decrease carrying capacity because of training activities and could result in a potential loss of habitat needed to support a nesting pair, which would impact reproductive capacity.

Scientific literature on this subject is clear - the presence of humans detected by a raptor in its nesting or hunting habitat can be a significant habitat-altering disturbance even if the human is far from an active nest<sup>16</sup>. Regardless of distance, a straight-line view of disturbance affects raptors, and an effective approach to mitigate impacts of disturbance for golden eagles involves calculation of viewsheds using a three-dimensional GIS tool and development of buffers based on the modeling<sup>17</sup>. Golden eagles have also been documented to avoid industrialized areas that are developed in their territory<sup>18</sup>. Additionally, the DEIS does not actually clearly analyze the impacts to and mitigations for the golden eagle under the Bald Eagle

15 USFWS 2003

16 Richardson and Miller 1997

17 Camp et al. 1997; Richardson and Miller 1997

18 Walker et al. 2005

Response to Comment N-18664 (Page 10 of 20):

**BIO-20:**

The air quality analysis assumes that at some point in the future, if left undisturbed, any ground disturbed by the proposed training activities would stabilize back to a less emissive state in terms of fugitive dust, regardless of whether these areas contain cryptobiotic soils. This is the case, as (1) disturbed desert soils lose their fine particles relatively quickly due to wind erosion and (2) to a much lesser extent, dew and precipitation would create a crust on the top of the soil. The Draft EIS recognizes the importance of cryptobiotic soil crusts (page 3.10-14), and potential impacts from the proposed action are described on page 4.10-8 and elsewhere. Considering that much of the action area is covered in cryptobiotic soils, mapping them is unnecessary. Protection of cryptobiotic soils will be a benefit of most species conservation measures, including those for the desert tortoise.

To estimate fugitive dust emissions, the DEIS assumed that all ground areas disturbed by the proposed training activities would have the same silt content and therefore the same potential to emit dust (presented in Appendix G Tables G-12 and G-14). Desert pavement is defined as a surface comprised of large angular or rounded rock fragments lying over mixed material. In other words, desert pavement has a lower silt content and therefore lower potential to emit dust compared to average desert soil evaluated in the DEIS. As a result, it is probable that operations on desert pavement would produce lower fugitive dust emissions compared to those estimated for these areas in the DEIS.

**BIO-21:**

An inventory was conducted between 2001 and 2005 of insects on the Combat Center (Pratt 2005), and found no federally-listed species. As such, it is expected that none would occur in the very similar adjacent lands that compose the study areas. In the event that a federally-listed species is discovered after approval of the proposed action, the Combat Center INRMP would be revised in coordination with USFWS to include conservation measures for that species.

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and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which prohibits, except under certain specified conditions, the take, possession, and commerce of such birds.

3. Badger

While badgers were not documented on the site, the proposed expansion area provides good habitat for them. Literature on the highly territorial badger indicates that badger home territories range from 340 to 1,230 hectares<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the proposed project could displace numerous badger territories. While surveys prior to activities are clearly essential, even passive relocation of badgers into suitable habitat may result "take". Excluding badgers from the site is likely to cause badgers to move into existing badger's territory. The recirculated or supplemental DEIS needs to include an actual analysis of impacts to badgers from the proposed project.

6. Desert Kit Foxes

The DEIS fails to mention the desert kit fox, much less provide data on the presence or absence of the species on site or the locations of natal and other types of dens. Desert kit foxes are "protected furbearing mammals" under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 460 and may not be "taken" at any time. As such the DEIS fails to analyze the impacts to this species. The revised or supplemental DEIS should identify the density of kit foxes in the proposed expansion area, including natal and other dens. If passive relocation is identified as an avoidance strategy, the DEIS must evaluate if suitable habitat occurs nearby and is not already occupied by existing kit foxes.

7. Cryptobiotic soil crusts and Desert Pavement

The proposed project is located in the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District area, which is already in non-attainment for PM-10 particulate matter<sup>20</sup>. The construction of the proposed project further increases emissions of these types of particles because of the disruption and elimination of potentially thousands of acres of cryptobiotic soil crusts. Cryptobiotic soil crusts are an essential ecological component in arid lands. They are the "glue" that holds surface soil particles together precluding erosion, provide "soil sites" for seed germination, trap and slowly release soil moisture, and provide CO<sub>2</sub> uptake through photosynthesis<sup>21</sup>.

The DEIS recognizes that on-site cryptobiotic soil crusts exist but defers the quantification and location of them to later. The proposed project will disturb an unidentified portion of these soil crusts and cause them to lose their capacity to stabilize soils and trap soil moisture. The DEIS fails to provide a map of the soil crusts over the project site, and to present any avoidance or minimization measures. It is unclear how many acres of cryptobiotic soils will be affected by the project. The revised or supplemental DEIS must identify the extent of the cryptobiotic soils on site and analyze the potential impacts to these diminutive, but essential desert ecosystem components as a result of this project.

19 Long 1993, Goodrich and Bank 1999  
 20 <http://www.mojaveairqualitymanagementdistrict.com/page.cfm?id=118>  
 21 Bellamy 2005, Bellamy et al 2001, Bellamy 1998, Bellamy et al 2007

BIO-17

BIO-18

BIO-19

BIO-20

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BIO-22:

Based on available research (e.g., Cutler et al. 1999; Epps et al. 2005, 2006, 2007) the Draft EIS describes the known populations on the Combat Center, in the east study area, and under the proposed airspace. No other populations are described in these sources that would be affected by the proposed action. Population fragmentation is not expected to occur as a result of the proposed project as fencing would be limited to tortoise exclusion fencing (maximum of 24 inches above ground) and three-strand smooth wire fencing (with elevated lower strand) installed in specific areas to protect desert tortoises. In addition, dirt roads in the study areas would not present barriers to dispersal.

BIO-23:

The proposed project is not expected to substantially increase habitat fragmentation, as any new roads would be at-grade or slightly above-grade dirt roads, and fencing would be limited to tortoise exclusion fencing (maximum of 24 inches above ground) and three-strand smooth wire fencing (with elevated lower strand) installed in specific areas to protect desert tortoises.

BIO-24:

Comment noted. Additional and more detailed conservation measures for identified significant impacts to the desert tortoise, as developed through Endangered Species Section 7 consultation with USFWS, are included in the Final EIS. Please refer to Section 2.8.4.

BIO-25:

Potential impacts to ephemeral water bodies are described in Section 4.10.2.1 (e.g., page 4.10-7, 4.10-8), and potential impacts to streams and related sensitive habitats are described in Section 4.13.2.1. No significant impacts to these resources were identified from proposed training activities. Additional discussion of cumulative effects on sand transport has been provided in Section 5.4.10.

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The DEIS fails to address if naturally occurring desert pavements occur in the proposed expansion areas. The issues of desert pavement are similar to cryptobiotic soils in their ability to stabilize surface particles in place, precluding erosion and dust, and they are easily damaged by vehicles and form/reform over geological time scales. The supplemental EIS must quantify the acreage of pavement, identify avoidance and minimization measures and analyze the potential impacts to the desert pavement areas including an evaluation of the impacts to air quality from disturbance of desert pavements.

BIO-20

8. Insects

The DEIS fails to address insects on the proposed project site. In fact no surveys or evaluation of rare or common insects are included in the DEIS. Sandy habitats are notorious for supporting endemic insects, typically narrow habitat specialists<sup>22</sup>. The revised or supplemental DEIS must include an analysis of rare insects in the proposed expansion area and the potential impacts on their survival from training activities. These issues need to be addressed in a supplemental DEIS.

BIO-21

9. Nelson's Bighorn Sheep

Nelson's bighorn sheep are known to inhabit mountain ranges adjacent to the proposed expansion area and the current base. These large mammals require intermountain access in order to maintain herd viability<sup>23</sup> and currently their historic connectivity corridors have been eliminated in parts of their range<sup>24</sup>. Activities in the proposed expansion areas could further restrict connectivity for the bighorn in the area. The DEIS fails to analyze the documented herds in ranges besides the Ship Mountains and the repatriated Bullion- Cleghorn herd. The supplemental DEIS must include an analysis of impact to Nelson's bighorn.

BIO-22

Because the movement corridors for Nelson's bighorn sheep have already been eliminated in key areas, the DEIS should consider participating in the construction of land bridges over Interstate 40 that would re-establish movement of bighorn (and other species) from the mountain ranges north of I-40 to the mountain ranges south of I-40. This feature would significantly increase the ability of herds or rams to re-establish previous movement corridors and increase genetic diversity of the bighorn, provide safe passage for species on the move from climate change, and keep the larger Mojave ecosystem connected.

10. Habitat Fragmentation

The habitat fragmentation, loss of connectivity for terrestrial wildlife, and introduction of predators and invasive weed species associated with the proposed expansion and ensuing activities in the proposed locations may run contrary to an effective climate change adaptation strategy. Siting the proposed expansion in the proposed location impacting ecologically

BIO-23

22 Dunn 2005.  
23 Epps et al. 2007, Epps et al 2006  
24 Epps et al. 2005

Response to Comment N-18664 (Page 12 of 20):

AQ-1:

Comment noted. DEIS Table 5-3 in Section 5.4.8 summarizes the calculations for GHG emissions that would occur from the following proposed activities: (1) aircraft operations below 3,000' above ground level (AGL), (2) operation of tactical equipment, (3) operation of tactical support equipment, and (4) on-road transport of personnel and equipment within the Mojave Desert Air Basin. These data represent the overwhelming majority of GHGs that would occur from proposed activities and that are the responsibility of the Marine Corps.

However, to provide a more detailed definition of GHGs that would occur from the project alternatives, Table 5-3 in the FEIS includes the following additional GHG emissions estimates: (1) construction GHG emissions, (2) GHG emissions from the entire flight of proposed aircraft operations within the project air spaces rather than just operations below 3,000' AGL, and (3) the generation of electrical power from sources on the Combat Center. The FEIS does not provide calculations of other sources of GHG emissions requested in the comment, as they are (1) nominal in comparison to the total GHGs generated by the project alternatives and/or (2) not the responsibility of the Marine Corps. It should be noted that the spreadsheet used to calculate GHGs for proposed tactical vehicles/support equipment in the DEIS had some inaccurate formulas that produced erroneously high GHG estimates (as shown in Appendix G Tables G-8 and G-36). Hence, even though the FEIS analysis includes additional sources of proposed GHGs, as requested in this comment, the total GHG estimations for the project alternatives in the FEIS are lower than those presented in the DEIS.

As stated in DEIS page 4.10-8, most crustal biomass in the project region of influence (ROI) occurs within the top 3 millimeters of the soil. This very thin layer of biomass has a limited potential to

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functioning ecosystems, occupied habitat and important habitat linkage areas, major washes and other fragile desert resources could undermine a meaningful climate change adaptation strategy. Moreover, the expansion activities will emit additional greenhouse gases and the DEIS contains no discussion of ways to avoid, minimize or off-set these emissions although such mitigation is clearly necessary. The way to maintain healthy, vibrant ecosystems is not to fragment them and reduce their biodiversity.

BIO-23

11. Failure to Identify Appropriate Mitigation

As stated above, the DEIS not only fails to provide adequate identification and analysis of impacts, inevitably, it also fails to identify adequate mitigation measures for the expansion's environmental impacts. "Implicit in NEPA's demand that an agency prepare a detailed statement on 'any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,' 42 U.S.C. § 4332(C)(ii), is an understanding that an EIS will discuss the extent to which adverse effects can be avoided." *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 351-52. Because the DEIS does not adequately assess the project's direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, its analysis of mitigation measures for those impacts is necessarily flawed. The DEIS must discuss mitigation in sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated." *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 352; *see also Idaho Sporting Congress*, 137 F.3d at 1151 ("[w]ithout analytical detail to support the proposed mitigation measures, we are not persuaded that they amount to anything more than a 'mere listing' of good management practices"). As the Supreme Court clarified in *Robertson*, 490 U.S. at 352, the "requirement that an EIS contain a detailed discussion of possible mitigation measures flows both from the language of [NEPA] and, more expressly, from CEQ's implementing regulations" and the "omission of a reasonably complete discussion of possible mitigation measures would undermine the 'action forcing' function of NEPA."

BIO-24

Although NEPA does not require that the harms identified actually be mitigated, NEPA does require that an EIS discuss mitigation measures, with "sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated" and the purpose of the mitigation discussion is to evaluate whether anticipated environmental impacts *can be avoided*. *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 351-52. As the Ninth Circuit recently noted: "[a] mitigation discussion without at least *some* evaluation of effectiveness is useless in making that determination." *South Fork Band Council of Western Shoshone v. DOI*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9th Cir. 2009) (emphasis in original).

Here, the DEIS does not provide a full analysis of possible mitigation measures to avoid or lessen the impacts of the proposed project and therefore the DEIS cannot properly assess the likelihood that such measures would actually avoid the impacts of the proposed project.

D. Impacts to Water Resources— Surface and Groundwater Water Impacts

As the DEIS notes, the proposed expansion encompasses a large number of washes and ephemeral streams and dry lakes that are not always dry. These areas provide important habitat values that will be compromised by the proposed training activities. Moreover, any loss of natural surface water flows and the re-direction of surface waters will have significant impacts to

BIO-25

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AQ-1 Continued:

sequester GHGs. Therefore, any loss of cryptobiotic soils due to proposed operations would result in an imperceptible loss of GHG sequestration. In addition, due to the sparseness of the vegetation within the ROI, any loss of vegetation due to proposed operations would have the same effect.

AQ-2:

The DEIS provides an adequate assessment of proposed PM10 impacts. It acknowledges that the proposed training exercises would generate substantial amounts of fugitive dust, as shown in the tables that present estimations of air emissions for each project alternative (refer to Section 4.8). The EIS dispersion modeling analyses determined that fugitive dust emissions would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the national ambient standard for PM10.

The special conservation measure (SCM) proposed in DEIS Section 2.8.3 to control fugitive dust emissions only applies to proposed construction activities. The construction company that performs the proposed construction would have to comply with this SCM as part of their contract with the Marine Corps. The FEIS clarifies this ambiguity. Due to the immensity and aridity of the proposed training areas, it would be infeasible to control fugitive dust generated from proposed training exercises.

AQ-3:

Table 5-3 in the FEIS has been revised to include the 2009 GHG emissions for the Combat Center. As stated on DEIS page 5-33, currently there are no formally adopted or published NEPA thresholds of significance for proposed GHG emissions.

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the dunes ecosystems. The impacts on soils and particularly on sand transport from the proposed project have not been adequately addressed in the DEIS.

Ephemeral and intermittent streams make up over 81% in the arid and semi-arid southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and California). These streams provide a variety of ecosystem services including

- landscape hydrologic connections;
- stream energy dissipation during high-water flows to reduce erosion and improve water quality;
- surface and subsurface water storage and exchange;
- ground-water recharge and discharge;
- sediment transport, storage, and deposition to aid in floodplain maintenance and development;
- nutrient storage and cycling;
- wildlife habitat and migration corridors;
- support for vegetation communities to help stabilize stream banks and provide wildlife services;
- and water supply and water-quality filtering<sup>25</sup>.

Yet the DEIS fails to evaluate the impact of the proposed project on the ephemeral and intermittent streams and the ecosystem processes that they provide both on and off of the proposed project site. The revised or supplement DEIS will need to include an analysis of these important issues.

**E. The DEIS Fails to Adequately Identify, Analyze and Off-set Impacts to Air Quality and GHG Emissions.**

Federal courts have squarely held that NEPA requires federal agencies to analyze climate change impacts. *Center for Biological Diversity v. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*, 508 F.3d 508 (9th Cir. 2007). As most relevant here, NEPA requires consideration of greenhouse gas emissions (“GHG emissions”) associated with all projects and, in order to fulfill this requirement the agencies should look at all aspects of the project which may create greenhouse gas emissions including operations, construction, and life-cycle emissions from materials. Where a proposed activity will have significant GHG emissions, the agency should identify alternatives and/or mitigation measures that will lessen such effects.

As part of the NEPA analysis federal agencies must assess and, wherever possible, quantify or estimate GHG emissions by type and source by analyzing the direct operational impacts of proposed actions. Assessment of direct emissions of GHG from on-site combustion sources is relatively straightforward. For the proposed activities, energy consumption for vehicles, manufacturing, transportation and construction will be the major source of GHGs. The indirect effects of a project may be more far-reaching and will require careful analysis. Within this category, for example, the supplemental EIS should evaluate, GHG and GHG-precursor emissions associated with construction, electricity use, fossil fuel use, water consumption, waste

<sup>25</sup> Levick et al. 2008.

BIO-25

AQ-1

Response to Comment N-18664 (Page 14 of 20):

**AQ-3 Continued:**

The Final EIS compared projected GHG emissions to Combat Center baseline conditions and the U.S. GHG inventory. This comparison is deemed adequate to determine the significance of proposed GHG emissions for NEPA purposes.

Since the DEIS concludes that GHGs from each project alternative would produce less than significant impacts, the Marine Corps proposes no mitigations to reduce proposed GHGs. However, as stated on DEIS page 5-40, the Marine Corps proposes an SCM that would maximize the use of biodiesel, where feasible, in equipment and vehicles that take part in exercises at the Combat Center under each project alternative, in place of ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) or aviation fuels. The CO2e emission factor for biodiesel is about 7 percent lower than for ULSD, which is the unmitigated fuel evaluated in the DEIS air quality/GHG analyses. In addition, DEIS Section 5.4.8 discusses broad-based programs initiated by the Marine Corps and Department of the Navy that will reduce energy consumption, will shift to renewable and alternative fuels, and thereby will offset proposed GHG emissions.

Regarding the lack of the DEIS to consider loss of carbon sequestration or to perform a life cycle analysis, please see the response to comment CBD AQ-1.

The DEIS evaluated 6 project alternatives and the difference in annual GHG emissions between these 6 alternatives is about 3 percent. Regarding measures that would reduce proposed GHGs, please see the first paragraph of this response.

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disposal, transportation, the manufacture of building materials (lifecycle analysis), and land conversion. Moreover, because many project may undermine or destroy the value of carbon sinks, including desert soils, the activities may have additional indirect effects from reduction in carbon sequestration, therefore both the direct and quantifiable GHG emissions as well as the GHG effects of destruction of carbon sinks should be analyzed.

AQ-1

The DEIS also fails to adequately address other air quality issues including PM10 both during activities which is of particular concern in this area which is a nonattainment area for PM10 and ozone. It is clear that extensive soil disturbing activities will result in significant amounts of bare soils and increased PM10 may be introduced into the air by wind and that the use of the area during training activities and operations will lead to additional PM10 emissions from the site. Although some mitigation measures are suggested they are not specific and enforceable and because the extent of the impact has not been adequately addressed as an initial matter there is no way to show that the mitigation measures proffered will reduce the impacts to less than significance.

AQ-2

The DEIS fails to analyze the GHG emissions in a meaningful way and therefore does not provide for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation. The DEIS has also failed to include the loss of carbon sequestration from soils in its calculations or to provide a lifecycle analysis of GHG emissions that include manufacturing and disposal of equipment. Moreover, it is undisputed that in the near-term GHG emissions will increase emissions during training activities, and in the manufacturing and transportation of the equipment. The DEIS fails to consider any alternatives to the project that would minimize such emissions or to require that these near-term emissions be off set in any way.

AQ-3

**F. The Analysis of Cumulative Impacts in the DEIS is Inadequate**

A cumulative impact is “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. The Ninth Circuit requires federal agencies to “catalogue” and provide useful analysis of past, present, and future projects. *City of Carmel-By-The-Sea v. U.S. Dept. of Transp.*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1160 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997); *Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 809-810 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1999).

“In determining whether a proposed action will significantly impact the human environment, the agency must consider ‘[w]hether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.’ 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(7).” *Oregon Natural Resources Council v. BLM*, 470 F.3d 818, 822-823 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2006). NEPA requires that cumulative impacts analysis provide “some quantified or detailed information,” because “[w]ithout such information, neither courts nor the public . . . can be assured that the Forest Service provided the hard look that it is required to provide.” *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. United States Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1379 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998); see also *id.* (“very general” cumulative impacts information was not hard look required by NEPA). The

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**CI-1:**

Notwithstanding the summary of NEPA requirements and applicable court cases, it is not clear from these comments what specifically is perceived to be inadequate about the cumulative analysis in the DEIS. There are very few examples provided. Nonetheless, a few revisions have been made to help clarify or explain selected portions of the analysis in Chapter 5 of the FEIS. The Department of the Navy considers cumulative impacts to be adequately addressed in the EIS.

The reference to an incomplete discussion of rare plants elsewhere in the EIS, and the suggestion that the cumulative impact assessment is therefore incomplete, is unfounded. Reconnaissance level surveys were used to determine which rare plants would be subject to focused surveys, and those focused surveys were completed.

**CI-2:**

Comment noted, but no specific examples of inadequate analysis are provided. The Department of the Navy considers cumulative impacts to be adequately addressed in the EIS.

**CI-3:**

Comment noted, but no specific examples of inadequate analysis are provided. Due to the nature of the proposed action, there is nothing about any of the project alternatives that would be considered growth-inducing. Indirect effects of the proposed action are addressed as appropriate in the individual resource sections in Chapter 4.

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discussion of future foreseeable actions requires more than a list of the number of acres affected, which is a necessary but not sufficient component of a NEPA analysis; the agency must also consider the actual environmental effects that can be expected from the projects on those acres. See *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995-96 (9th Cir. 2004) (finding that the environmental review documents “do not sufficiently identify or discuss the incremental impact that can be expected from each [project], or how those individual impacts might combine or synergistically interact with each other to affect the [ ] environment. As a result, they do not satisfy the requirements of the NEPA.”) Finally, cumulative analysis must be done as early in the environmental review process as possible, it is not appropriate to “defer consideration of cumulative impacts to a future date. “NEPA requires consideration of the potential impacts of an action before the action takes place.” *Neighbors*, 137 F.3d at 1380 quoting *City of Tenakee Springs v. Clough*, 915 F.2d 1308, 1313 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1990) (emphasis in original).

The DEIS identifies some of the cumulative projects but does not meaningfully analyze the cumulative impacts to resources in the California desert from the many proposed projects (including renewable energy projects, transmission, and others). Moreover, because the initial identification and analysis of impacts is unfinished, the cumulative impacts analysis cannot be complete. For example, because the identification of potentially occurring rare plants on site is unfinished and incomplete, the cumulative impacts are also therefore inadequate.

The DEIS also fails to consider all reasonably foreseeable impacts in the context of the cumulative impacts analysis. See *Native Ecosystems Council v. Dombek, et al*, 304 F.3d 886 (9th Cir. 2002) (finding future timber sales and related forest road restriction amendments were “reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts”). The DEIS also fails to provide the needed analysis of how the impacts might combine or synergistically interact to affect the environment in this region. See *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995-96 (9th Cir. 2004).

The NEPA regulations also require that indirect effects including changes to land use patterns and induced growth be analyzed. “Indirect effects,” include those that “are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.” 40 C.F.R. s.1508.8(b) (emphasis added). See *TOMAC v. Norton*, 240 F. Supp.2d 45, 50-52 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding NEPA review lacking where the agency failed to address secondary growth as it pertained to impacts to groundwater, prime farmland, floodplains and stormwater run-off, wetlands and wildlife and vegetation); *Friends of the Earth v. United States Army Corps of Eng’rs*, 109 F. Supp.2d 30, 43 (D.D.C. 2000) (finding NEPA required analysis of inevitable secondary development that would result from casinos, and the agency failed to adequately consider the cumulative impact of casino construction in the area); see also *Mullin v. Skinner*, 756 F. Supp. 904, 925 (E.D.N.C. 1990) (Agency enjoined from proceeding with bridge project which induced growth in island community until it prepared an adequate EIS identifying and discussing in detail the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of and alternatives to the proposed Project); *City of Davis v. Coleman*, 521 F.2d 661 (9th Cir. 1975) (requiring agency to prepare an EIS on effects of proposed freeway interchange on a major interstate highway in an agricultural area and to

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CI-1

CI-2

CI-3

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CI-4:

The results of Section 7 consultation with USFWS have been incorporated into the FEIS, including the cumulative impact assessment, as appropriate. Additional text has been added regarding sand transport systems, but the impacts (including cumulative) are still expected to be less than significant because no structures would be constructed in the midst of a transport corridor under the any of the project alternatives (which is how solar developments disrupt sand transport). The proposed action is not expected to contribute to any cumulative sand transport impacts that may be associated with other types of projects. Additional discussion about cumulative effects to Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat and water resources has been added in the FEIS. Golden eagles would not be substantially affected by the proposed action, and their populations in the desert are stable (and increasing). Cumulative impacts to this species are expected to be minimal (see also response to Comment N-18664, BIO-17).

NEPA-2:

The purpose and need statement on page 1-4 of the DEIS does not foreclose consideration of meaningful alternatives to the proposed expansion areas; on the contrary, as described in Section 2.7, numerous alternatives were considered in addition to the six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative that were carried forward for analysis in the DEIS (Section 2.4). How the purpose and need relates to the analysis of alternatives is addressed in Sections 2.2, 2.3, and 2.7 of the DEIS.

include a full analysis of both the environmental effects of the exchange itself and of the development potential that it would create).

Among the cumulative impacts to resources that have not been fully analyzed are impacts to desert tortoise, impacts to sand transport systems and Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat, impacts to golden eagles, and impacts to water resources. The cumulative impacts to the resources of the California deserts has not been fully identified or analyzed, and mitigation measures have not been fully analyzed as well.

CI-4

**G. The EIS' Alternatives Analysis is Inadequate**

NEPA requires that an EIS contain a discussion of the "alternatives to the proposed action." 42 U.S.C. §§ 4332(C)(iii),(E). The discussion of alternatives is at "the heart" of the NEPA process, and is intended to provide a "clear basis for choice among options by the decisionmaker and the public." 40 C.F.R. §1502.14; *Idaho Sporting Congress*, 222 F.3d at 567 (compliance with NEPA's procedures "is not an end in itself . . . [but] it is through NEPA's action forcing procedures that the sweeping policy goals announced in § 101 of NEPA are realized.") (internal citations omitted). NEPA's regulations and Ninth Circuit case law require the agency to "rigorously explore" and objectively evaluate "all reasonable alternatives." 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a) (emphasis added); *Env'tl. Prot. Info. Ctr. v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 234 Fed. Appx. 440, 442 (9th Cir. 2007). "The purpose of NEPA's alternatives requirement is to ensure agencies do not undertake projects "without intense consideration of other more ecologically sound courses of action, including shelving the entire project, or of accomplishing the same result by entirely different means." *Env'tl. Defense Fund, Inc. v. U.S. Army Corps of Engrs.*, 492 F.2d 1123, 1135 (5th Cir. 1974). An agency will be found in compliance with NEPA only when "all reasonable alternatives have been considered and an appropriate explanation is provided as to why an alternative was eliminated." *Native Ecosystems Council v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 428 F.3d 1233, 1246 (9th Cir. 2005); *Bob Marshall Alliance v. Hodel*, 852 F.2d 1223, 1228-1229 (9th Cir. 1988). The courts, in the Ninth Circuit as elsewhere, have consistently held that an agency's failure to consider a reasonable alternative is fatal to an agency's NEPA analysis. *See, e.g., Idaho Conserv. League v. Mumma*, 956 F.2d 1508, 1519-20 (9th Cir. 1992) ("The existence of a viable, but unexamined alternative renders an environmental impact statement inadequate.").

If the EIS rejects an alternative from consideration, it must explain why a particular option is not feasible and was therefore eliminated from further consideration. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a). The courts will scrutinize this explanation to ensure that the reasons given are adequately supported by the record. *See Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 813-15 (9th Cir. 1999); *Idaho Conserv. League*, 956 F.2d at 1522 (while agencies can use criteria to determine which options to fully evaluate, those criteria are subject to judicial review); *Citizens for a Better Henderson*, 768 F.2d at 1057.

Here, the DEIS too narrowly construed the project purpose and need such that the DEIS did not consider an adequate range of alternatives to the proposed project. The alternatives analysis is inadequate even with the inclusion of the alternative site configurations and a reduced acreage alternative. Additional feasible alternatives should be considered which would avoid occupied desert tortoise habitat as well as alternatives that would have used other existing

NEPA-2

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military bases in the area for cooperative training exercises.

**II. Conclusion**

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. In light of the many omissions in the environmental review to date, we urge MCAGCC to revise and re-circulate the DEIS or prepare a supplemental DEIS before making any decision regarding the proposed expansion areas and activities. In the event MCAGCC chooses not to revise the DEIS and provide adequate analysis, the MCAGCC should reject the expansion proposal. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about these comments or the documents provided.

Sincerely,

  
Heene Anderson  
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Brian Croft, USFWS, [brian\\_croft@fws.gov](mailto:brian_croft@fws.gov)  
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Tom Plenys, EPA, [Plenys.Thomas@epa.gov](mailto:Plenys.Thomas@epa.gov)

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May 24th, 2011

Dear 29Palms EIS Project Manger, or Whom it May Concern,

I write this letter with great sadness, and have to tell you that we are opposed to your alternatives, including alternative 7. We feel this is nothing more than a massive land grab. The Marines don't need over a million acres of land for training. You already have the largest training facility in the country (932 square miles.) Why not use Fort Irwin's base or the more than 700 bases that we have around the world that cost about 100 billion to maintain each year? The military budget for 2010 was 693 billion dollars, however it went somewhere between 1.10 trillion to 1.35 trillion dollars for our national defense in 2010. Our military spends more than China, Russia, Japan, India, and the rest of NATO combined. To date it's estimated we have spent 373 billion for the war in Afghanistan & at least 745 billion for the war in Iraq. U.S. government has the biggest mountain of debt in the history of the world. Our Congress continues to cut Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security, but somehow our military is allowed to keep recklessly spending. The U.S does doesn't need to be world's policeman, and the last thing the USMC needs is another 188,000 acres of land.

I've attended every meeting since this has started. The last meeting I attended was at the Ontario High School. This is the second time I've gone to look at your alternative maps that don't show street names or indicate where a highway is. Seven maps that don't show you anything but dots. How stupid is that?

The next map was from the "Desert Tortoise Expert." I can honestly tell you that I know more about this animal than he does. Maps were so small and still have no idea where his study took place. He began to tell me that over the last two years every square inch of the desert (188,000 plus acres) have been covered on foot to find out approximately how many tortoise's there are in this area. I find this amazing, I've been in the desert for the last two years and never seen anyone "walking/studing" anything.

He then said whoever did all this walking found over 2,500 desert tortoises in this area. So I asked him what are you going to do with all those tortoises? Are you going to do another relocation experiment like Fort Irwin? He said no, we would never do that. So what then I asked?? He surprisingly said that there will more than likely be a significant loss of life! Nice answer.

Here's a quote from BLM's website..... "The desert tortoise is listed by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species. Under the provisions of the endangered species act (ESA) Anyone who takes, disturbs, harass, ham, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect or attempt to engage in any such conduct is subject to a civil and or criminal penalties of up to a 50,000 fine and one year in jail or both. The desert tortoise is also considered by California to be a THREATENED species." How is the military immune to these laws???

He then claimed that tortoise's living on the base are doing just fine. What kind of study is that, captive tortoise's? It's impossible to re-locate these animals, and its not ok for the U.S. military to be immune to laws the are set in place to protect them. Here is a quote from Ilene Anderson, a biologist with the Center for Biological Diversity. "Fort Irwin's translocation program was disastrous for tortoises, and it is unfathomable that they are proposing the same disaster for 1,000 more. This species is already threatened with

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Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

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extinction, and this proposal (relocation) is destined to kill off more of them.<sup>2</sup> They also found that Fort Irwin tortoises are distinctly different from their relatives to the north, east and south. So please tell me what's your plan, other than just killing them I would like to have a clear plan for these animals, and any other animal in the area.

He then began to tell me a few stories of how stupid some of the off roaders are, and how they have unknowingly been on the 29 Palms base to check out the airplane crash sight, and how he can't believe that these "stupid people" just drive where ever they want. So I asked him instead of spending millions and millions of dollars on an unwanted expansion, why not put up a "stupid" fence? His comment was a fence would be too costly.

Also couldn't make out what properties would be affected by this. Was told at least 20 percent of homes/land-owners would loose their properties. Most of the people who live in this area are on fixed incomes, moving is out of the question. Home values/properties are down almost 30 percent. So receiving a fair market value in this economy would basically be worthless. That is so un-American, it really is.

Another point I want to address is the noise this will create. We experience this noise on a regular basis with windows that rattle and the ground that shakes by helicopters flying by, jets flying by etc. One report I read said that the war in Iraq has led to epidemic rates of hearing loss among troops. Your training will be no different, so as a civilian, we will be susceptible to loosing our hearing as well, especially because were just outside the two mile boundary. The locals in Lucerne Valley hear the noise from your training everyday & they are over 60 miles away.

Also, a comment for the BLM. Petroglyph's are not being protected. Have been to Numerous sites in the desert, and none of them have any protection around them. In 2010, our family was out off roading in the desert & came upon a blacked out SUV escorted by a fully loaded helicopter with more experts taking photos of the petroglyph's in an area just off Bessemer Mine Road. The petroglyph's are in such bad condition that you can hardly see them anymore. Also, why is the military flying around with a fully loaded helicopter with civilians in the area?

I can tell you from experience the one thing the BLM does do well is harass you. Our family was out off roading when a BLM ranger pulled us over. He accused us of taking a piece of wood from outside a boundary marker. This was not the least bit true. This BLM ranger had a gun on each calf, a gun on each thigh and 2 more around his waist. He also had handcuffs, a billy club, pepper spray, nunchucks, and to top it off a beer mug flag on top of his vehicle. Could also see an AR15 on the dash of his truck. He was absolutely terrible to us. Made our 5 year old cry & asked if she was enjoying her wilderness adventure. I did address this with someone at BLM, & they told me they didn't know anyone like that & claimed it must have been one of the volunteers. (and that's O.K??)

Google BLM and see how they are currently paying millions of dollars to settle harassment lawsuits all over the US, with taxpayers money no less.

How do you plan to keep historical artifacts like the petroglyph's from being ruined?? The desert tortoise? What about the Joshua Trees? As a property owner I'm not even allowed to cut one down because they are protected. Once again how is the USMC immune to this?? What about all the other plants and animals??? Below is a look at things the Marines will destroy:

Response to Comment N-18665 (Page 3 of 7):

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range sweep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

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**Mammals:**

The American Badger, Big Free tailed Bat, Bighorn Sheep, Black tailed Jackrabbit, Bobcat, Borra's Pocket Gopher, Brazilian Free Tailed Bat, Brush Mouse, Cactus Mouse, California Leaf-Nosed Bat, California Myotis, Coyote, Deer Mouse, Desert Cottontail, Desert Kangaroo Rat, Desert Pocket Mouse, Desert Shrew, Desert Woodrat, Gray Fox, House

**Mammals Continued:**

Mouse, Kit Fox, Little Pocket Mouse, Long tailed Pocket Mouse, Merriam's Kangaroo Rat, Mountain Lion, Mule Deer, Pallid Bat, Panamint Kangaroo Rat, Porcupine Pronghorn, Raccoon, Ringtail, Rock Squirrel, Round-tailed round Squirrel, Southern Grasshopper Mouse, Spotted Bat, Striped Skunk, Townsend's Big Eared Bat, Western Harvest Mouse, Western Pipistrelle, White Tailed Antelope Squirrel, Yuma Myotis, Wild Horse, Wild Burro.

**Lizards:**

Chuckwalla, Desert iguana, Collared Lizard, Whiptail Lizard, Desert Spiny Lizard, Zebra Tailed Lizard, Horned Lizard, Mojave Fringe Toed Lizard, Side Blotched Lizard, Long Nosed Leopard Lizard, Long Tailed Brush Lizard, Desert Night Lizard.

**Turtles:**

Desert Tortoise, Western Pond Turtle.

**Snakes:**

Mojave Rattlesnake, Red Racer, Gopher Snake, Rosy Boa, Sidewinder, mountain Kingsnake, Coachwhip, Common Kingsnake, Glossy Snake, Long Nosed Snake, Night Snake, Speckled Rattlesnake, Spotted Leaf Nosed Snake, Striped Whipsnake, Western Ground Snake, Western Lyre Snake, Western Blind Snake, Western Patch nosed Snake, Western Shovel nose Snake, Western Diamond Back.

**Birds:**

Quail, Mountain Quail, Gambel's Quail, California Quail, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Red Tailed Hawk, Golden Eagle, American Kestrel, Prairie Falcon, American Coot, Rock Pigeon, White Winged Dove, Mourning Dove, Greater Roadrunner, Barn Owl, Western Screech Owl, Great Horned Owl, Elf Owl, Burrowing Owl, Long Eared Owl, Goatsuckers, Common Poorwill, Anna's Hummingbird, Costa's Hummingbird,

**Birds Continued:**

Ladder Backed Woodpecker, Black Phoebe, Say's Phoebe, Loggerhead Shrike, Western Scrub-Jay, Pinyon Jay, Common Raven, Oak Titmouse, Verdin, Bushitts, Bushitf, Wrens, Cactus Wren, Rock Wren, Canyon Wren, Bewick's Wren, Gnatcatchers, Blue Gray Gnatcatcher, Black Tailed Gnatcatcher, Northern Mockingbird, California Thrasher, LeConte's Thrasher, European Starling, Silky Flycatchers, Phainopepla, Spotted Towhee, California Towhee, Great Tailed Grackle, House Finch, Lesser Goldfinch, Weaver Finches, House Sparrow.

**Insects & Spiders:**

Arid Lands Honey Ants, Aztec Pygmy Grasshopper, Bee Assassin, Blister Beetle, Broad Necked Darkling Beetle, Carolina Wolf Spider, Centruroides Scorpions, Cochineal Bug, Creosotebush Grasshopper, Desert Tarantula, Giant Vinegarone, Green Valley Grasshopper, Inconspicuous Crab Spider, Jerusalem Cricket, Little Black Ant, Mormon Cricket, Obscure Ground Mantid, Pallid Winged Grasshopper, Red Velvet Ant, Rough Harvester Ant, Spine Waisted Ants, Tarantula Hawk Wasp, Texas Carpenter Ant, Thistle-down Velvet Ant.

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Public comments on the EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

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**Butterflies and Moths:**

Antilean Blue, Becker's White, Behr's Hairstreak, Bordered Patch, California Cankerworm, Chara Checkerspot, Common Sulphur, Desert Checkerspot, Desert Gray Skipper, Desert Green Hairstreak, Desert Orange Tip, Desert Swallowtail, Great Basin Sooty wing, Gray Metamark, Large California Spanworm Moth, Large White Skipper, Leda Hairstreak, Monarch, Pahaska Skipper, Painted Lady, Pale Blue, Pearly Marblewing, Phaon Crescentspot, Queen, Sandhill Skipper, Short Tailed Black, Sleepy Orange, Small Blue, **Butterflies and Moths Continued:** Texan Crescentspot, Western Pygmy Blue, White Lined Sphinx, Yucca Giant Skipper.

**Trees/Plants:**

Joshua Tree, Pinyon Pine, Mesquite, California Juniper, California Fan Palm Oases, Cresote Bush, Mojave Yucca, Barrel Cactus, Beavertail Cactus, Cottontail Cactus, Foxtail Cactus, Hedgehog Cactus, Mojave Mound Cactus, Old Man Prickly Pear, Pencil Cholla, Teddy Bear Cholla.

**Wild Flowers:**

Booths Primrose, Brown eyed Primrose, California Buckwheat, Cram Cups, Datura, Desert Alyssum Bush, Peppergrass, Desert Chicory, Desert Lily, Desert Star, Desert Tobacco, Dune Evening Primrose, Gravel Ghost, Parachute Plant, Little Sunbonnets, Schott Gilia, Fremont's Pin Cushion, Prickly Poppy, Rattlesnake Weed, Thick Leaved Ground Cherry, Tidy Tips White Layia, Woolly Arsonia, Yerba Mansa, Bigelow Coreopsis, Bladderpod, Brittlebush, Cresote, Desert Dandelion, Desert Marigold, Desert Parsley, Desert Rock Pea, Desert Senna, Desert Sunflower, Desert Turnpot, Fiddleneck, Golden Gilia, Goldfields, Mojave Poppy, Mojave Sun Cup Field, Primrose, Prince's Plume, Rick Daisy, Scale Bud, Shrubby Butterweed, Trailing townuta, Wallace Woolly Daisy, Western Wallflower, Apricot Mallow California Poppy, California Fagonia, Chuparosa, Desert Indian Paintbrush, Eatons Firecracker, Monkey Flower Purple Mat, Red Maids, Red Stem Dilarae, Desert Calico, Desert Five Spot, Desert Sand Verbena, Desert Willow, Lilac Sunbonnet, Owls Clover, White Rhatany, Blue Dicks, Canterbury Bells, Chia, Davy Gilia, Desert Larkspur, Desert Lavender, Desert Lupine Shockley, Lupine, Fremont Phacelia, Indigo Bush, Lacy Phacelia, Mojave Aster, Paperbag Bush, Pygmy Leaved Lupine, Thistle Sage, CLace Leaf Phacelia, Fat Faced Phacelia, B55McKay, Miners Lettuce, Leafy Stemmed Coreopsis Coreopsis, White Bracted Stick Leaf, Blazing Star, Mentzelia, Involucrata, Goldenhead, Eayless Encelia, Green Brittlebush, Frutescans, Little White Forget Me not Cryptantha, Hear Leaved Primrose, Desert Hyacinth, Weak Stem Mariposa, Calochortus Flexuosa, Red Mariposa, Kennedyi, Desert Milkweed, Water Cress, Fragrant Penstamen, Penstamen Palmeri.

**Desert Grasses:**

Big Galleta, Indian Rice Grass, Bush Muhly, Fluff Grass, Red Brome, Desert Needle.

This doesn't include, natural rock formations, natural sand dunes, craters & volcanic formations, natural water sources, canyons, faults, abandoned mines, old abandoned historical houses and historical land marks, the tourist industry, the filming industry, and the off roading industry. Not to mention the locals in Lucerne Valley who depend on the money generated by off roaders.

If we had to pick one alternative, it would be for you to move east, far away from Johnson Valley. Another expert at one of the meetings told me that moving east is just not possible. He said there is a railroad in the area, a natural pipeline in this area, and lastly when they try to drive tanks on a particular lake bed they sink down to low. Since when do you need perfect areas to practice on? Your going to have issues like that in

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combat. Moving a pipeline and railroad is nothing compared to ruining all the things listed above in this letter.

The off roading community has never done the damage or would ever do the damage that the USMC will do to this precious and one of a kind area left in the world. Allowing you or any one else to come in and ruin this area is un-thinkable. In fact, we still find metal debris, and bomb fragments left over from the 1950's when you used this valley for target bombing/practicing. This area has had enough of that.

For the last 30 years all over the U.S. riding areas have been closing down. We're already so limited with places to ride thanks to the Pelosi's, the Boxer's, and the Feinstein's of the world. Quite frankly we're fed up and sick of it. What you're planning is terrible, and really not the least bit justified when you have access to training facilities all over the world.

It's time to Stay out of Johnson Valley.

Sincerely,



Christina Wilson

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Response to Comment N-18665 (Page 7 of 7):

Other plants and animals that are currently in danger:

6

**Mammals:**

Southern Pocket Gopher-C C  
Desert Bighorn Sheep-S  
Mountain Lion-C  
Townsend's Big Eared Bat-C

**Birds:**

Bald Eagle-T  
California Brown Pelican-E  
Least Bell's Vireo-E  
Mexican Spotted Owl-T  
Yuma Clapper Rail-E

**Reptiles:**

Coachella Valley Fringe-Toed Lizard-T  
Desert Tortoise-T

**Amphibians:**

Lowland Leopard Frog-C

**Fish:**

Bony tail Chub-E  
Colorado Squawfish-E  
Devil's Hole Pupfish-E  
Mohave Tui Chub-E  
Humpback Chub-E  
Razorback Sucker-E

**Insects and Snails:**

Badwater Snail-C  
Devil's Hole Warm Springs Riffle Beetle-C

**Plants:**

Bear-Paw Poppy-C  
Foxtail Cactus-C  
Eureka Valley Evening Primrose-E  
Panamint Daisy-C  
Sticky Buckwheat-C

**KEYS TO FEDERAL STATUS:**

E-Endangered  
T-Threatened  
C-Candidate  
S-Sensitive

Comment ID: N-18666

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18666  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 15 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are NORTH ANDERSON, ROCK PILE, where we engage in such activities as RAKING, TRAIL RIDING. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$1000+ on gas, groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$500 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: LETTIES, HOMETOWN BUFFET, TOM'S NO. 2, STATE BROS.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name William Lighthart WILLIAM LIGHTHART  
Address 7900 CORA ST, SUNLAND, CA 91040

Date 5-4-2011

Response to Comment N-18666:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18667

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18667  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 6 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are OHV areas, where we engage in such activities as hiking. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$100 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$100 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: FRY STORES, STORES, RESTAURANTS.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name Mike Kaplan  
Address 6530 olcott tujunga ca 91072

Date 5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18667:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18668

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18668  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 6 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are \_\_\_\_\_, where we engage in such activities as PLAY RIDE WITH KIDS when preparing for a trip, we spend \$600 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$50 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: BURGER JOINTS & FOOD STORES.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name Andy Warner

Address 3538 STEVENS

LACRESCENTA, CA. 91214

Date 5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18668:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18669

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18669  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 15 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are CAMP ROCK RD, where we engage in such activities as CAMPING and RIDING. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$500 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$300 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: RESTAURANT, GAS STATION.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name SAM DEMPSEY  
Address 6606 BENCINO AVE.  
VAN NUYS CA 91406  
Date 5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18669:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18670

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5119

Comment ID: N-18670  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 10 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are CAMP ROCK ROAD - ANDERSON DRY LAKE, where we engage in such activities as Motorcycle Riding - OFF ROADING. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$150 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$275 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: gas station - CONVENIENCE STORE RESTAURANT

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name CLIFF KOLLER  
Address 11044 white gate AVE  
Sunland CA 91090  
Date 5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18670:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18671

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18671  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 12 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are CAMP RING SLASH, where we engage in such activities as CAMPING OFF ROAD ACT. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$200 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: LETTY CAFE, MARKET,  
SUNICE STATION

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name

MIKE NARDI

Address

7452 VERBENA RD OAK HILLS, CA 92344

760 956 2613

Date

5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18671:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18672

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18672  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 20 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are CAMP ROCK / BESSMER, where we engage in such activities as CAMPING & RIDING. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$200 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: ALL GAS STATIONS, ALL CONVENIENCE MARKETS, RESTAURANTS, LUCERNE MARKET.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name LARRY M. GEORGE LMG  
Address 9023 WHEELWAY CT  
ALTA LOMA, CA 91737 (909) 985-4630  
Date 5/4/11

Response to Comment N-18672:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18673

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5119

Comment ID: N-18673  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 30 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are VICTORVILLE PASS, RED HOLE, where we engage in such activities as CAMPING, MOTORCYCLING. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$500 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: LUCERNE VALLEY SUPER MARKET, CECILY'S RESTAURANT, 76 GAS, CAFE 247, STANLEY'S SURF SUPPLY.

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the Draft EIS provides an inadequate and error-filled analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unsupported assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the complete devastation of the local economy is misleading and pure fantasy. This part of the EIS, among others, must be redone.

Respectfully,

Name DALE SHUTTLEWORTH

Address 6235 PARLIAMANT WAY

ARIZONA CA 91737

Date 5-4-11

Response to Comment N-18673:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18674

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Comment ID: N-18674  
Date Received: May 27, 2010

RE: Comments on 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project and Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) notify you that the EIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy – impacts for which no meaningful mitigation is offered.

From our perspective, the only rational alternative is the "No Action" alternative. Given that the U.S. Government is dangerously burdened with debt, there is no way that we, as a nation, can responsibly pay for this project at this time. Further, only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels, which is absolutely critical to the survival of the local economy.

Let me explain what I mean. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 10 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Casper Lakes, where we engage in such activities as Motorcycle Dirt & Riding. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$1000 on gas groceries, vehicle parts, etc... in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$400 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are camping. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: NUMEROUS

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

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Respectfully,

Name Long Del  
Address 818 Bubbling Well Drive  
Glendon Ca 91741  
Date 4-5-2010

Response to Comment N-18674:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18675

Comment ID: N-18675  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 Corps  
 Joint Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: meadows dry lake bed Johnson valley DATE: 5-28-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

I love the smell of the campfire I like the trails.  
If you don't know the hummers that you don't know Jack.  
You make nice friends the desert is the best place in the world.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name in address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18675:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18676

Corps  
 Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Comment ID: N-18676  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: MEANS DRY LAKE BED DATE: 5-23-11

Johnson Valley  
 MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

To me Johnson valley's Means dry lake bed is a huge part of my family's and friends lives. we get together on the lake bed for the holidays to go rumping, and to drive my Rock crawler. we have many traditions that involve going to the lakebed for Anniversaries, club runs, races, and birthdays. This is one of the few OHV areas that is still open to the public, if this OHV area were to be closed or taken away from us it would hurt families by taking traditions away and hurt the economy by not having a place for off road vehicles to use.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: ANTHONY Schreengast
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): Socal INDEPENDENT 4x4
- ADDRESS: 1049 Bernard Drive Fullerton California 92835

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18676:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18677

Comment ID: N-18677  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 rps  
 ng Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms Dry Lakebed "Johnson Valley" DATE: 5-23-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*Johnson Valley (the hamsters) is like a second home to me. I have been going out there since my daughter was one. So like 7 yrs now I love the dirt roads, camping, the trucks. I see all my friends that live far away miss family event. My dad, brother and boyfriend all off road. I couldn't imagine not going. Its my weekend vacation. My brother got married & all the boys went on a "honeymoon run". Every yr we go to celebrate their anniversary. Hopefully one day I could have my own run. We always clean up after ourselves as well as everyone else that we come across. There are not that many places we have left in CA to do our runs. I hope you don't close us down.*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request  
 2. ORGANIZATION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Response to Comment N-18677:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

**Comment ID: N-18678**

Comment ID: N-18678  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
**Corps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 al Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Means Dry Lakebed "Johnson Valley" DATE: 4/20/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety              | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

Johnson Valley (The Hammer) has been the source of numerous, irreplaceable memories of exploration, adventure, and growth. I have been vacationing at Means lake bed the past 10 years and can't say there is any other place in California that makes me happier. The scenic environment and adventure trails have allowed me to grow as a person and escape from clutter of everyday life. My adventures there began with a truck & a bunch of friends exploring the inhospitable terrain & more recently has escalated to building a custom vehicle specifically for the hard core trails that define the Johnson Valley area. The offroad group I now "wheel" with plans their year around trips to the region and would be lost if it were to be taken by the military.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: JEFF SIMPSON  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): O.C.T. OFFROAD  
 3. ADDRESS: 2609 BALFOUR AVE FULLERTON, CA 92831

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

**Response to Comment N-18678:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18679

Comment ID: N-18679  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
**Corps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 al Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below

LOCATION: Means Lake Bed DATE: 4-20-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |

*I've been enjoying the terrain & completion for years. My now adult children also enjoy the camp as of now.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: KEITH R. KROH  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) ORANGE COUNTY TOYS  
 3. ADDRESS: 3941 ARAGON PL. Full. 92835

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18679:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18680

Comment ID: N-18680  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson VALLEY OHV DATE: 04-20-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Kory Kron  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. ADDRESS: 3941 Aragon Pl. Fullerton, CA 92835

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18680:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18681

Comment ID: N-18681  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 Corps  
 Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley/means Lakebed DATE: 4/20/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

The Desert is A place for  
 winter walking/Biking ~~and~~ wildflower  
 watching the ~~scenery~~ Scenery then  
 some people dont see the  
 Beauty its fabulous

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: DENIS HIGGINSON
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): OCT ORANGE County Togs
- ADDRESS: 9612 mills Ave Whittier Cal 90604

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18681:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18682

Comment ID: N-18682  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 ps  
 ig Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Menus Lake bed Hammer DATE: 9/20/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I would ask you to please reconsider closing the hammer recreation area. I feel that the revenue loss to the US economy will drastically impact employment. Also I have invested alot of money and equipt to this govt. Do the right thing and take the desert East of 29 Palms.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Rod Kaven
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 5827 E Fairview

Long Beach ca 90815

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18682:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18683

Comment ID: N-18683  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011

rps  
 ng Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: MEANS DRY LAKE BED, JOHNSON VALLEY DATE: 5/1/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

MY FAMILY AND I TRAVEL OUT TO THIS AREA ABOUT 10 TIMES A YEAR TO RIDE THE TRAILS, EXPLORE THE DESERT, CAMP AND WATCH THE STARS AT NIGHT WITH OUR TELESCOPES. THE FREEDOM WE CAN FIND HERE IS PRICELESS. AS A VIET-NAME VET, I KNOW THE IMPORTANCE OF TRAINING. I HOPE THE MARINES KEEP IN MIND THAT THERE AREN'T TO MANY PLACES WHERE WE CITIZENS CAN GO OUT AND BE FREE. PLEASE DON'T TAKE JOHNSON VALLEY AWAY FROM US.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Response to Comment N-18683:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18684

Comment ID: N-18684  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
**orps**  
**ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Marine Corps Base, Johnson Valley DATE: 5-27-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*I like to go out to the desert with my family and friends. We enjoy the wildlife, the camping, the rock climbing, the stars and the open space. We make it a family event.*

*Please Don't take it away from us!*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Response to Comment N-18684:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18685**

Comment ID: N-18685  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground, Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

  
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**Response to Comment N-18685:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18686**

Comment ID: N-18686  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

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Sincerely,

Branson Rogers  
7402 Dumosa Ave  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

**Response to Comment N-18686:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18687**

Comment ID: N-18687  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

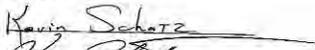
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Sincerely,

  
  
61183 Appalachian St.  
DHS, CA 92240

**Response to Comment N-18687:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18688**

Comment ID: N-18688  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

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Sincerely,



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**Response to Comment N-18688:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18689**

Comment ID: N-18689  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

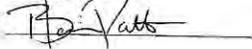
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**Response to Comment N-18689:**

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**Comment ID: N-18690**

Comment ID: N-18690  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

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**Response to Comment N-18690:**

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**Comment ID: N-18691**

Comment ID: N-18691  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

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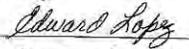
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Sincerely,

  
59079 MESA DR  
Yucca Valley Calif.

**Response to Comment N-18691:**

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**Comment ID: N-18692**

Comment ID: N-18692  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

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Sincerely,

*William Gunn*  
*62582 Appian Way*  
*Jashua Tree, Ca 92582*  
*Will Gunn*

**Response to Comment N-18692:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18693**

Comment ID: N-18693  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground, Johnson Valley OHV park.

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**Response to Comment N-18693:**

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**Comment ID: N-18694**

Comment ID: N-18694  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

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Sincerely,

*William Hackney*  
*11333 Artesia way*  
*Morongo Valley ca.*  
*92256*

**Response to Comment N-18694:**

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**Comment ID: N-18695**

Comment ID: N-18695  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

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Sincerely,

Joe Maravelles

57571 Warren way

Yucca valley ca. 92284

**Response to Comment N-18695:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18696**

Comment ID: N-18696  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible.

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah Rogers

**Response to Comment N-18696:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18697**

Comment ID: N-18697  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

  
MARC D. SMITH

**Response to Comment N-18697:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18698**

Comment ID: N-18698  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,



58801 Sun Via Dr.

Yuca Vly, CA 92284

Elliot Graham

**Response to Comment N-18698:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18699 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18699  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps**  
**ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**al Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 5-23-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice               | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____               |

Dear Project Manager:  
I am writing this letter to protest your proposed expansion west into Johnson and Lucerne valleys. I've lived here eighteen years. Its peaceful, quiet, and the air is clean, people are hospitable. I have seen it grow from a village to a town. Our local businesses depend on local and tourist dollars to keep their doors open. Most of the people living here are retirees and ex servicemen and old age pensioners. Money is tight. Your expansion west will cause a lot of tourists to go elsewhere. With Bin Laden out of the picture, things in the middle east will improve. I hope you would reconsider going west and instead go east.

- \*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*
1. NAME: John McCallum
  2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
  3. ADDRESS: P.O. Box 2059  
Lucerne Valley CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18699 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18699 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18699 (Page 2 of 2):**

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18700

Comment ID: N-18700  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
al Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: May 22 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes       | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic            | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                         | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety         | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal          | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*We need the area to be left as it is.  
It is a value to the area for recreation  
and the welfare of the community  
go find a different area to practice on  
to many people need the area as it is*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Renee L. Smith
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 31970 Sage Rd Lucerne Valley  
Ca 92556

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18700:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18701

Comment ID: N-18701  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 orps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: East Lucerne Valley DATE: 5.22.2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other <u>wildlife</u>     |

In the past year I spend many hours in the desert. I have seen many tortoise and other wildlife. They and there habitat will be destroyed.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18701:

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. Section 2.8.4 of the EIS outlines several measures that would be taken to reduce impacts from the proposed action to biological resources, including establishment of desert tortoise protection areas.

Comment ID: N-18702

Response to Comment N-18702:

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18702  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: East Lucerne Valley DATE: 5-21-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                  |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Wildlife</u> |

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Comment ID: N-18703

Comment ID: N-18703  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
Mining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley-East DATE: 5-22-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                   |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>wild life</u> |

This is the government taking away public lands when they can go East and not destroy the economy of small desert towns and have no effect on the public. It's time the government started LISTENING to it's people

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18703:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18704

Response to Comment N-18704:

Comment ID: N-18704  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
al Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: EAST END LUGBONE VA/NOVA DATE: 5-21-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

THE WAY THE GOVERNMENT CAN TAKE AWAY PUBLIC LAND  
YOU CAN GO FIRST WITH NO EFFORT ON THE PUBLIC'S

Name Withheld by Request

1. NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

*J. 3/95*

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18705

Response to Comment N-18705:

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18705  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
al Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 5-20-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: LIZ GIBSON  
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
3. ADDRESS: PO Box 1963 Lucerne Valley  
11175 LAKEVIEW AV.

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Comment ID: N-18706

Comment ID: N-18706  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps**  
**Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: EAST END of LUDERNO VALLEY DATE: 05-28-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

This is just another way to take away public lands  
This will also cause much noise & air pollution which  
can be a danger to the health and welfare of the many  
elderly that live in this area.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) former Business owner

3. ADDRESS: Luderno Valley CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18706:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18707

Response to Comment N-18707:

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18707  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 The Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Luquerre Valley DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety              | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Comment ID: N-18708

Response to Comment N-18708:

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18708  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 5-21-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice               | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes          | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals          | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                               | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal             | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

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\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: ROBERT CROSS
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 672 LUCERNE VALLEY, CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

**Comment ID: N-18709**

Comment ID: N-18709  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

23 May 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29 Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir,

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley were all founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land with the stipulation the individual would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

These historical communities should be preserved, as they stand now, with no further impact from the 29 Palms Marine base from noise, vibration, air pollution and light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will do just that.

I urge you to take the base expansion to the east, which will eliminate the negative impacts on these historical communities.

Thank you for your attention.

Sincerely,



Debby Cossart

**Response to Comment N-18709:**

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18710

Comment ID: N-18710  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 Corps  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
 Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: JOHANSON VALLEY DATE: 5/20/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other           |

PROTECTED SPECIES DESERT TORTOISE, CALIF. ROSIE BOA CONSTITUTION AND ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS SUCH AS HORNED OWL, BARN OWL, RED TAIL HAWKS, RAVENS, QUAIL DOVE AND MANY OTHER BIRD, HORNY TOADS, DESERT GECKO, CHUCKAWALLA, AND MANY OTHER LIZARDS. GROUND SQUIRREL, SIDE WINDER RATTLE SNAKE, MOJAVE GREEN RATTLE SNAKE, WESTERN DIAMOND BACK RATTLE SNAKE, SPECKLE WESTERN DIAMOND BACK RATTLE SNAKE, RED WESTERN DIAMOND BACK RATTLE SNAKE, MOUNTAIN LIONS, COYOTES, DESERT FOX, SKUNK, WHY WOULD ANYONE WANT TO DESTROY THIS HABITATE, MY WINDOWS RATTLE AS IT IS WHEN THEY BOMBING MOVE CLOSER AND THE WILL MOST LIKELY BREAK.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request HELL OUT OF MY DOGS.
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18710:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. Section 2.8.4 of the EIS outlines several measures that would be taken to reduce impacts from the proposed action to biological resources, including establishment of desert tortoise protection areas.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18711

Comment ID: N-18711  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley DATE: May 19, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Dear Sirs

Please don't take my house, I am 73 years old, on a very limited income and cannot start again. But if you do, I want you to know that I will commit suicide because I don't want to be a burden to my children

---

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): ✓ ✓ ✓

3. ADDRESS:

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18711:

Thank you for your comment you submitted on May 19th 2011 regarding the proposed 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition / Airspace Establishment project. The Marine Corps recognizes that this is an important topic for many different people and organizations and it's important to us to receive public feedback on the proposal.

In regard to your specific concerns you listed in your comment, we want to assure you that your specific property is not included in any of our study areas. Your house and property are roughly two (2) miles outside of the edge of our western study area. You do not need to worry about losing your house.

We here at the Combat Center are committed to being good neighbors to the best of our ability. Though the public comment period has ended, please feel free to contact us if you have any concerns or questions about the project. For more information on the project, please call 760-830-3764, or contact the program office by mail at:

29 Palms Training Land /Airspace  
MAGTF, MCGACC  
Building 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Thank you again for your comment and we hope we reassured you on your concern about your property and our project.

Comment ID: N-18712 (Page 1 of 4)

Comment ID: N-18712  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley, CA DATE: 5-23-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I, Gary R. Buzza, own property located at 6074 Maloof Ln., Lucerne Valley, 92356, and 54375 Mi Casa Ln., Johnson Valley, 92285. These 2 properties are located 5 miles south of Means Dry Lake. I AM STRONGLY OPPOSED TO ANY BASE EXPANSION TO THE WEST. I have been visiting this area since 1971 for recreational purposes such as hiking, horseback riding, motorcycle and dune buggy riding, and socializing with a large group of friends. Base expansion to the west would negatively impact all homeowners and residents by excessive noise, dust and eliminate a great portion of existing recreational space. I question the need for the base to acquire more land, but if needed, the expansion should be to the east, as this action would negatively impact far less civilians. I have included a printout of further concerns and facts that also express my feelings. THANK YOU.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Gary R. Buzza *Gary R. Buzza*

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) TAXPAYER

3. ADDRESS: 6054 Chesebro Rd.  
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18712 (Page 1 of 4):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley. Furthermore, Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS has been updated as appropriate to address issues related to the Small Homestead Act.

**Comment ID: N-18712 (Page 2 of 4)**

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29 Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The DEIS states:  
Potential Impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed.  
Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:

Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.  
It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the

**Response to Comment N-18712 (Page 2 of 4):**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18712 (Page 3 of 4)

EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
- Devaluation of surrounding private property.
- Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries.

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS

CR-1

AQ-1

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18712 (Page 3 of 4):

CR-1:

Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

AQ-1:

It is acknowledged that the proposed training exercises will generate substantial amounts of fugitive dust, as shown in the EIS tables that present estimations of air emissions for each project alternative. The EIS dispersion modeling analyses determined that fugitive dust emissions would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the national ambient air quality standard for PM10.

NOI-1:

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18712 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment N-18712 (Page 4 of 4):

correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

NOI-1

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage.

"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision."  
—Desert Magazine 1944

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves. The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant.  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

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Date Received: May 27, 2011

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May 24, 2011

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

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Re: Comment Letter re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and  
Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base

Dear Project Manager:

This firm represents EcoLogic Partners, Inc. ("EcoLogic"), a consortium of family-oriented recreation groups dedicated to preserving public access to outdoor recreational venues in California and throughout the American West. On behalf of EcoLogic and its members, we have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the Department of the Navy's "Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment" project, which is the necessary antecedent to the proposed expansion of the United States Marine Corps base at Twenty-Nine Palms, California. For the reasons discussed below, EcoLogic objects to the proposed Project, including the Navy's preferred alternative (Alternative 6), and herein takes the position that the Project, while certainly providing some marginal benefit to the Marine Corps training mission, is not necessary to that mission nor justified in light of its cost. Further, EcoLogic finds the Draft EIS analytically deficient. Not only does the document fail to study key impacts, many of its conclusions rest on dubious, unsupported assumptions. Perhaps worst of all, the Draft EIS omits fundamental baseline information regarding the environmental resources that currently exist in the proposed expansion area, rendering an impact analysis impossible.

1. THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS TOO COSTLY

Although the training facilities currently available at Twenty-Nine Palms and other USMC bases have allowed the Marines to ably conduct military operations in Kuwait, Iraq, and Afghanistan, the Department of the Navy has now decided that it needs to expand the Twenty-

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 1 of 20):

NEPA-1, NEPA-2, and NEPA-3:

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

GEN-1:

Chapter 3 of the EIS contains background information for each resource area, while impacts are analyzed in Chapter 4. All relevant technical studies and additional information are contained as appendices in Volume 2. References cited are included in the project Administrative Record.

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Nine Palms facility by more than 200,000 acres to provide for “sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), each consisting of three battalion task forces and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements.” (DEIS, ES-1) It is difficult to see how the recent wars in the Middle East, or any reasonably anticipated conflict elsewhere in the world, would require that an entire MEB be trained simultaneously at a single military installation. Increasingly, military experts and civilian decision-makers are beginning to question the strategic and tactical value of maintaining and training such large (and costly) forces.

A few recent comments demonstrate the point:

- George Will (Washington Post – May 3, 2011):
  - “[T]he enormous military footprint in Afghanistan, next door to bin Laden’s Pakistan refuge, seems especially disproportionate in the wake of his elimination by a small cadre of specialists.”
  - Jim Lacey of the Marine Corps War College notes that Gen. David Petraeus has said there are perhaps about 100 al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan. ‘Did anyone,’ Lacey asks, do the math?’ There are, he says, more than 140,000 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan, or 1,400 for every al-Qaida fighter. It costs about \$1 million a year to deploy and support every soldier – or up to \$140 billion, or close to \$1.5 billion a year, for each al-Qaida fighter. ‘In what universe do we find strategists to whom this makes sense?’ he asked.”
- Mark Thompson (Time – “How To Save A Trillion Dollars” – April 25, 2011):
  - “The U.S. continues to field and maintain a global force designed during an era of sky’s-the-limit defense budgets.”
  - “Across Washington, all sorts of people are starting to ask the unthinkable questions about long-sacred military budgets. Can the U.S. really afford more than 500 bases at home and around the world? Do the Air Force, Navy and Marines really need \$400 billion in new jet fighters when their fleets of F-15s, F-16s and F-18s will give them vast air superiority for years to come? Does the Navy need 50 attack submarines when America’s main enemy hides in caves?”
  - “It may seem strange to talk about defense cuts while the U.S. is waging one war in Afghanistan, is mopping up a second in Iraq and has just launched a half-war in Libya. But those conflicts have made it easy to forget the warning of Admiral

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 2 of 20):

NEPA-4:

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

NEPA-5:

Section 4.13 of the EIS addresses impacts to water resources. As described in the EIS, development of new groundwater sources in other basins for potable water supply would not occur under the proposed action. The analysis of water resources impacts is presented in Section 4.13 of the EIS. A long-term water study is not within the scope of this EIS. If one of the alternatives proposed in the EIS is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

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Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that ‘the single biggest threat to our national security is our debt.’ Which points to an almost tragic irony of Washington’s \$700 billion annual appetite for military stores: we are borrowing cash from China to pay for weapons that we would presumably use against it. If the Chinese want to slay us, they don’t need to attack us with their missiles. They just need to call in their loans.”

- o “Numbers alone tell much of the story: We are now spending 50% more (even excluding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) than we did on 9/11. We are spending more on the military than we did during the Cold War, when U.S. and NATO troops stared across Germany’s Fulda Gap at a real superpower foe with real tanks and thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at U.S. cities. In fact, the U.S. spends about as much on its military as the rest of the world combined.”
- o “While the U.S.’s military spending has jumped from \$1,500 per capita in 1998 to \$2,700 in 2008, its NATO allies have been spending \$500 per person over the same span. As long as the U.S. is overspending on its defense, it lets its allies skimp on theirs and instead pour the savings into infrastructure, education and health care. So even as U.S. taxpayers fret about their health care costs, their tax dollars are paying for a military that is subsidizing the health care of their European allies.”
- o “[R]evising America’s defense budget will happen only if the U.S. takes a hard-eyed look at the dozens of military operations that are no longer vital or affordable.”
- o “\$1 trillion in cuts wouldn’t really be as drastic as it sounds – or as the military’s no-surrender defenders insist. Such a trim would still leave the Pentagon fatter than it was before 9/11.”
- o “California Representative Howard McKeon, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services Committee, says, ‘A defense budget in decline portends an America in decline.’ Attitudes like that can bankrupt a nation, and the public senses its.”
- o “For too long, an uninterested and distracted citizenry has been content to leave the messy business of national defense to those with bottom-line reasons for force-feeding it like foie gras goose. It’s long past time . . . for U.S. taxpayers to demand that its government spend what is needed to defend the country – not a penny more.”

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 3 of 20):

NOI-1:

Noise exposure from existing/current conditions are provided in Chapter 3. Appendix H as four sections: H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling; Section H-4 is the noise primer.

As explained in Section 3.9.3, the aircraft and ordnance operations for the Baseline scenario was *initially* based on WR 02-13. However, all modeled operations from Wr 02-13 were updated and validated by the USMC to represent current activity. For example, the EAF and airspace operations were updated in 2009-2010 for the MV-22 West Coast Basing EIS as stated in Section 3.9.3.1. Furthermore, ordnance operations from WR 02-13 were doubled relative to the 2003 noise study to better represent current activity at the Combat Center as stated in Section 3.9.3.1.

Modeling for the EAF is consistent with the Navy AICUZ Instruction which recommends use of annual average daily operations. If annual average busy day operations were modeled, it is estimated CNEL would be only 3 dB greater than CNEL reported in the DEIS and exposure to airfield noise exposure greater than or equal to 65 dB would likely be fully contained within the Combat Center boundary.

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- Robert Gates, United States Secretary of Defense
  - "Given America's difficult economic circumstances and parlous fiscal condition, military spending on things large and small can and should expect closer, harsher scrutiny. The gusher has been turned off, and will stay off for a good period of time." (CNN, May 9, 2010)
  - "The department must start setting priorities, making real trade-offs and separating appetites from real requirements." (Quoted in Huffington Post, August 9, 2010)
  - "We are not exempt from scrutiny and being asked to figure out what we are doing with less dollars." (Quoted in MSNBC.com, January 6, 2011.)
  - "The spigot of defense funding opened by 9/11 is closing."
  - "It is important to remember that every defense dollar spent to over-ensure against a remote or diminishing risk — or in effect to run up the score in a capability where the United States is already dominant — is a dollar not available to take care of our people, reset the force, win the wars we are in and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable." (As quoted in Associated Press article, April 6, 2009).

NEPA-1

These quotations demonstrate that well-informed commentators, military experts, and the Secretary of Defense himself believe it is time that the desires of the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy yield to the economic realities facing the United States. Former Secretary of State Colin Powell has also stated that the defense spending must be brought into line with prevailing economic conditions, stating "I don't think the defense budget can be made sacrosanct and it can't be touched."<sup>1</sup> Gregg Easterbrook, writing for *The New Republic*, describes the Pentagon's recent spending behavior as "unprecedented" and "irrational."<sup>2</sup> The problem, as Easterbrook points out, is that very few people question the military when it asks for more money: "[S]ecurity spending and military deployment are presented to the nation as virtually untouchable. If the Pentagon wants something, the logic goes, then it must be necessary. This is far from true."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Mandell, Nina. "Colin Powell: Cut Military Spending to Reduce Deficit," *Daily News*, January 24, 2011.  
<sup>2</sup> Easterbrook, Gregg. "Wasteland: The Pentagon's nearly unprecedented, wildly irrational spending binge." *The New Republic*. Printed on *The New Republic* (<http://www.tnr.com>). November 10, 2010.  
<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 4 of 20):

NOI-1 Continued:

Airspace flight operations are assessed using the CNELmr metric consistent with Navy RAICUZ Instructions. This metric accounts for the sporadic nature of airspace activity as well as the "startle" effect caused by low-altitude high-speed flights (see Section 3.9.1). The Maximum Sound Level (Lmax) metric was not specifically designed to measure impulsive sounds and although Lmax provides supplemental noise exposure information, the correct noise metric for assessment of land use compatibility is CNEL (and its derivatives). In addition to the aforementioned high-altitude refueling activity, modeled operations included low-altitude high-speed flight operations characteristic of existing and proposed flight activity at the Combat Center (see Appendix H).

BIO-1:

Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information. As noted in your comment, noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel.

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The situation has become so bad that President Obama is calling for \$400 billion in defense cuts over the next 12 years. This same sentiment is echoed in a letter signed by 57 members of Congress and submitted last October to the President's "National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform."<sup>4</sup> It is now clear that, to make a sizeable dent in the national debt, every branch of the military must scale back its wish list. Only those programs, weapon systems, force structures, and facilities projects with an established, well-documented need should be funded. All others must either be revamped to better address an actual military deficiency or be abandoned. Ironically, it is the nation's unwillingness or inability to curb defense spending – which has *doubled* since September 11, 2001 – that has made the United States so debt-ridden and vulnerable.<sup>5</sup>

NEPA-1

With respect to the proposed base expansion at Twenty-Nine Palms, the Project documents, including the Draft EIS, are remarkable in that they fail to explain why the current facilities, however small when compared to what the Marines want, are inadequate to meet the basic training needs of this branch of the military. Nowhere does the Marine Corp identify or describe any mission failure, large or small, that resulted from an inability to train an entire MEB simultaneously at the same site. In fact, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the expeditionary portion of the Marine's mission was carried out with great success.<sup>6</sup> It has been the long-term occupation of these countries, and the forced, constant exposure to IEDs and similar low-tech weapons, that has caused the majority of casualties. So while the Marines certainly *desire* a larger base and could probably make productive use of the extra space, there is no evidence that they *need* more land or that their combat readiness will suffer markedly without it.

NEPA-2

The Draft EIS and other documents also fail to mention how much the proposed Project will cost. While the land may be transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of the Navy for next to nothing, and while the ongoing costs of maintaining the site may not be prohibitive, the expense of conducting the full-MEB training twice a year could be

NEPA-3

<sup>4</sup> Klein, Ezra. "Barney Frank, Ron Paul and 55 others advocate for defense cuts." *Economic and Domestic Policy, and Lots of It*. October 13, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Ramesar, Romesh. "Military Spending Must Be Part of the Deficit Debate." *Time*. April 11, 2011. ["Though we can never be entirely safe from harm, our strategic advantages far exceed our vulnerabilities. In fact, the one clear and present threat to the American way of life is the size of the national debt."] Note that it is not enough to target "waste" in military procurement. "[S]imply going after Pentagon waste and abuse won't be enough. To conserve its power, the U.S. will need to reduce the size of its armed forces, curtail expensive missions and shrink America's military footprint around the world." *Ibid*.

<sup>6</sup> The Draft EIS admits this fact on page 1-23, stating, "Marine Corps successes in the first Gulf War in 1991, in leading the introduction of U.S. forces into Afghanistan in 2001, and again in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, have validated the Marine Corps' doctrinal training philosophy of live-fire combined arms MAGTF integration through CAX."

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 5 of 20):

BIO-1 Continued:

Discussion is included throughout the EIS noting the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for Nelson's bighorn sheep (page 4.10-14 and others) and the desert tortoise (page 4.10-11).

BIO-2:

Section D, Paragraphs 1-3: The Draft EIS contains the best available information on the occurrence and -distribution of special status and other status animal and plant species in the west study area. The BLM is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS, and was unable to provide any wildlife or plant inventory information. As a result, the detailed surveys conducted for the EIS, which include surveys for: 1) tortoise abundance and density; 2) abundance of the Mojave fringe-toed lizard, burrowing owl, Mojave ground squirrel, and chuckwalla; 3) distribution and abundance of all sensitive plant species; 4) occurrence of special status aquatic invertebrate species; represent the best available information.

Section D, Paragraph 4: The Marine Corps is committed to protection of the public and the environment. Section 4.4.2.3 of the EIS discusses the management of hazardous materials and wastes under the proposed action. Under any land acquisition scenario, current procedures for spill prevention, containment, cleanup, and management of hazardous wastes (including expended ordnance) would be implemented as outlined in Combat Center Order 5090.1D and environmental Standard Operating Procedures.

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huge, running to the tens of millions of dollars per annum. Again, no one can be sure how expensive this will be, because the Marines did not bother to calculate the cost (or if they did calculate it, they did not feel compelled to disclose the figures.) This is precisely the kind of budgetary arrogance that typifies military spending requests.<sup>7</sup> Without accurate estimates regarding the cost of the proposed project, there is no means to weigh its purported benefits against its fiscal, environmental, and socio-economic impacts.

II. THE DRAFT EIS IS INADEQUATE

A. Failure to Provide Basic, Necessary Studies

Before identifying the specific defects of the EIS on a topic-by-topic basis, it is important first to examine a systemic flaw that plagues the entire EIS – the failure to provide the technical studies that purportedly support the document’s impact analyses.

Data set forth in the EIS indicate that the proposed base expansion and the training activities contemplated on the newly-acquired land could adversely affect air quality, ambient sound/noise levels, biological resources, recreational activities, cultural resources, and socio-economic conditions. Other data from the EIS suggests that the project could also result in adverse impacts on hazardous materials, airspace management, water supply, water quality, and greenhouse gas emissions. As to each of these impact categories, the EIS concludes that the project’s potential effects are either (a) not significant, or (b) significant and unavoidable. However, in most cases, the EIS fails to include the technical studies necessary to support such conclusions.

For example, the EIS fails to provide a water supply study, a water quality study, or an inventory of potential greenhouse gas sources and emissions. The EIS *does* provide a technical appendix for noise, but it is not a study *per se* of the project’s potential impacts on the existing ambient environment. Instead, it is merely a primer on noise metrics – very helpful in terms of understanding noise measurements, but not helpful at all in terms of determining the actual noise impacts of the project.

<sup>7</sup> In a detailed letter to President Obama’s special “Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform,” Senator Tom A. Coburn, M.D. (R., Okla.) states that part of the problem is that “the Pentagon doesn’t know how it spends its money.” According to Senator Coburn, who is a trained CPA, “This incomprehensible condition has been documented in hundreds of reports over three decades from both the Government Accountability Office (GAO) and the Department’s own Inspector General (DOD IG).” In fact, the DOD Inspector General issued a report which concluded that DOD’s financial management systems do not facilitate but actually “prevent DOD from collecting and reporting financial information . . . that is accurate, reliable, and timely.” *Id.* While the accounting nightmares at the Pentagon may *explain* why the Marines have not disclosed the cost of the proposed Project over its lifetime, it does not *excuse* their unwillingness to develop this information and present to the public.

NEPA-3

GEN-1

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 6 of 20):

BIO-2 Continued:

Section D, Paragraph 5: The Draft EIS presents a discussion of impacts to all sensitive plant and wildlife species known to be present in the proposed action area. Impacts to the desert tortoise are given appropriate prominence in the impact analysis, as it is the only resident species listed under the Federal ESA.

Section D, Paragraphs 6-7: While it is true that survey methods have changed and continue to change, it is not true that these changes invalidate previous estimates of tortoise density or abundance. The surveys conducted in 1997/1999 (Woodman et al. 2001) represent the best available information for tortoise density on the Combat Center. Tortoise surveys are currently being conducted at the Combat Center as directed under the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and the Basewide Biological Opinion; however, the results of these surveys will not be available until 2012 and thus could not be included in the EIS. Surveys conducted for the study areas (Karl 2010) used both the accepted USFWS protocol and the TRED model survey. Calculations of abundance and density for were performed for both methods for the preferred alternative (Alternative 6) as part of the Section 7 consultation process with USFWS. The values generated by these two methods were similar, with the TRED model survey providing a smaller confidence interval and greater precision than the USFWS. Therefore, the TRED model survey was presented in the EIS as the most accurate and detailed model. The conclusion drawn in your comment regarding the comparison of tortoise densities on the Combat Center and the west study area (Section D, paragraph 7) is inaccurate.

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The Biological Resource appendix is likewise deficient. It does not describe existing biological conditions on the affected site(s) or specifically identify where they exist. Nor does it explain how and to what extent biological resources will be affected by the project. Rather, the Biological Resource appendix simply describes the types of disturbances that currently occur on the Combat Center and in the proposed expansion areas, and then draws some conclusions regarding the project's potential impacts on the federally-listed desert tortoise. No other species is discussed. So this Biological Resource appendix cannot serve as the technical basis for the impact analysis set forth in the biology section of EIS. Even if the desert tortoise discussion was adequate (which it is not, see below), the absence of any assessment of project impacts on desert birds, mammals, other reptiles, sensitive plants, and wildlife movement, renders the document incomplete and defective. The EIS also refers to the 2007 Basewide Biological Opinion prepared by the USFWS (the 2007 BO), and contends that the conservation measures from this BO will effectively mitigate Project impacts on desert tortoise. As with other critical documents, however, the 2007 BO is not included in the EIS as an appendix, so there is no way for the public to review its contents or test the assertions made in the EIS.

GEN-1

The Cultural Resource appendix is also of little value. It is merely a compendium of the various known artifacts and historical sites that exist in the areas being proposed for annexation to the base. Nowhere does the appendix actually evaluate the proposed Project's potential to damage or destroy these artifacts and/or historical sites. Therefore, it, too, is wholly inadequate and may not serve as the technical basis for the EIS's analysis of Project impacts on cultural resources.

Finally, as indicated above, the EIS provides no data whatsoever as to the cost of the proposed Project, including costs associated with the MEB training operations to be conducted on the newly-acquired land.

NEPA-4

**B. The EIS Fails to Analyze USMC Potential to Deplete Aquifers in Western Study Area**

On page 3.13-19, the EIS makes a startling disclosure: The Combat Center is running out of water and has no current means to augment its supply.<sup>8</sup> Specifically, the Combat Center obtains all of its water – potable and non-potable – through groundwater pumping. However, the aquifer that provides most of this water, Surprise Spring, is becoming dangerously depleted. In

NEPA-5

<sup>8</sup> The EIS attempts to downplay this problem by claiming that conservation efforts at the Combat Center have reduced water consumption by 26% over the last decade. However, despite these reductions in consumption, the Combat Center still overdrafts the Surprise Spring aquifer by 2,900 acre feet (AF) per year, and overdrafts the Twenty-nine Palms Valley aquifer by 1,040 AF per year. (Table 3.13-5).

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 7 of 20):

**BIO-2 Continued:**

Information from one survey cannot be used to identify a trend – the USFWS requires more than 10 years of surveys across their monitoring strata to even begin to identify population trends (USFWS 2010). Further, mountainous areas not suitable for desert tortoises compose a much larger portion of the Combat Center than in the west study area, thus leading to large areas of low desert tortoise density on the Combat Center. Taking into account the different density categories used in the Combat Center desert tortoise density surveys as compared to the west study area surveys, as well as the topography, the densities observed on the Combat Center after decades of military training are roughly comparable to those observed in the west study area – large areas of low densities with pockets of moderate density where habitat is most suitable and disturbance is lower.

Section D, Paragraph 8: The estimates of take presented in the Draft EIS include a large range only when including potential impacts on the existing Combat Center. Estimates of take in the lands to be acquired have much less spread due to survey data with a greater number of density “categories”. As noted in your comment, the Marine Corps consulted with the USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to formally identify an estimate of “take” under the preferred alternative, as well as appropriate conservation measures to minimize or offset potential impacts to tortoises and tortoise habitat. The outcome of this consultation is detailed in the Biological Opinion (see Appendix O of the FEIS). The Draft EIS does not state that the project would have “no significant effects” on biological resources, as your comment suggests.

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fact, the Marine's have so overdrafted the aquifer that groundwater levels have dropped by as much as 190 feet. (EIS, 3.13-19) Worse, Surprise Spring is an ancient aquifer that does not recharge readily, which means that it "is not a renewable resource." (EIS, 3.13-19) In short, the Combat Center's primary source of water is rapidly disappearing and the Marines desperately need to find another one.

The Western Study Area ("WSA"), by contrast, overlies a different groundwater subbasin – one with a substantial supply of water. (EIS, 3.13-20; Table 3.13-5) It would appear, then, that the Marine Corps, apart from wanting the WSA for military training operations, may also be looking to acquire access to the groundwater resources beneath it. Although the groundwater from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers is high in Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), it can either be treated for potable uses, or "blended" with higher-quality water for a variety of potable and non-potable uses. The EIS never acknowledges that the Marines plan to use WSA groundwater to supplement existing supplies. Indeed, the EIS does not even discuss this very plausible scenario, and for this reason alone is defective. Nevertheless, the EIS does mention that the Marines are "evaluating plans to 'blend' groundwater from the Surprise Spring subbasin with those [sic] from another aquifer(s)." (EIS, 3.13-19) These blending scenarios were apparently modeled by the USGS in 2008. (*Ibid.*) However, the details of this modeling effort are not provided.

Nevertheless, the water resource data set forth in the EIS, while cryptic, suggest strongly that the Marine Corps, once it secures possession of the WSA, will begin pumping groundwater from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers to blend with water derived from Surprise Spring. The EIS, however, fails to assess whether and to what extent this effort to temporarily address the Combat Center's water shortage will deplete the aquifers in Johnson Valley and Means Valley. In fact, the EIS does not even disclose how much water the proposed Project will require. As a result, the EIS is deficient as a matter of law.

In short, the Combat Center's undisclosed desire to acquire the water beneath the WSA reminds one of the following dialogue from the movie *Chinatown*:

Noah Cross: "You see Mr. Gittes. Either you bring the water to L.A. – or your bring L.A. to the water."

Jake Gittes: "How do you do that?"

<sup>9</sup> The Combat Center also draws groundwater from the Twentynine Palms Valley subbasin, which is also depleted and functions at a recharge deficit. (Table 3.13-5)

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 8 of 20):

BIO-2 Continued:

In several locations (e.g., Table ES-2, page 4.10-11, Table 4.10-14), it is clearly stated that impacts to the desert tortoise would be significant. Finally, a suite of mitigation measures being developed with USFWS, such as a translocation plan, designation of new Special Use Areas, etc. are described in more detail in the Final EIS and would be expected to reduce the take of tortoises, though not to a level of less than significant.

REC-1:

Section 4.2.1, Approach to Analysis for Recreation, acknowledges incomplete or unavailable information, therefore, in accordance with CEQ regulations the Marine Corps conducted interviews with BLM and other key recreation organizations and stakeholders to obtain reliable data and assumptions on annual visitor-days of use. The Marine Corps worked closely with BLM to develop reasonable assumptions for estimated loss of visitor-days of use from Johnson Valley as described under each action alternative. These assumptions were approved by BLM staff knowledgeable about and responsible for recreation management of the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a Displaced OHV Recreation Study (DORS) to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

NEPA-5

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Noah Cross: “—just incorporate the Valley into the city so the water goes to L.A. after all. It’s very simple.”

— *Chinatown* (Screenplay by Robert Townes)

C. The EIS Noise Analysis is Inadequate

As indicated above, the EIS does not actually provide a Noise Study as a technical appendix. Instead, Appendix H is simply a primer on noise modeling and does not provide any data on the existing sound environment or the Project’s impact on that environment. Likewise, the EIS itself fails to describe ambient sound levels in and adjacent to the three study areas – i.e., the WSA, the Eastern Study Area (“ESA”), or the Southern Study Area (“SSA”). Without existing sound level data, there is no way to measure the extent to which the Project will alter the current sound environment. Nor is there any way to determine whether the Project’s net impact on noise is significant.

Even the baseline used for “existing” noise conditions at the *Combat Center* defies logic. Rather than measure *current* aircraft noise (i.e., from 2008 or 2009), the EIS uses a 2003 noise study – WR 02-13 – that is based on airfield operations that took place in 2001. Not only is such information 10 years old, it fails to account for the significant increase in flight operations that has occurred since the “War on Terror” began. It appears that the Marines, in an effort to trim costs and/or save time, simply pulled an old noise study off the shelf rather than perform a new one. NEPA does not permit this kind of sloppy work, especially since there is nothing preventing the Marines from conducting a fully updated noise study at the *Combat Center*. There is also no explanation for altering the noise model to reflect “annual average daily operations” instead of “annual average busy day operations.” (See, EIS, 3.9-4) This change results in an underreporting of potential noise effects.

The EIS noise analysis also uses the wrong metric for determining the significance of project-related noise events. For example, the MEB training contemplated by the proposed Project entails low-altitude strafing and bombing runs by fixed and non-fixed wing aircraft.<sup>10</sup> Flight operations such as these create high-intensity noise of very short duration, resulting in substantial annoyance to any person living or working nearby. Rather than assess this impact using the Lmax noise metric, which is specifically designed to measure impulsive sound, the EIS uses the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) metric, which averages noise levels over a certain period of time, usually 24 hours. Obviously, this metric will not fully capture the noise

<sup>10</sup> According to the EIS, combat training flights will be conducted at altitudes as low as 500 feet above ground level (AGL). (EIS, 3.7-9)

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 9 of 20):

REC-1 Continued:

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

AQ-1:

Comment noted. Table 5-3 in the FEIS has been revised to include the 2009 GHG emissions for the *Combat Center*. The FEIS GHGs cumulative analysis also compares proposed GHGs to these emissions. The Final EIS compared projected GHG emissions to *Combat Center* baseline conditions and the U.S. GHG inventory. However, the spreadsheet used to calculate GHGs for proposed tactical vehicles/support equipment in the DEIS had some inaccurate formulas that produced erroneously high GHG estimates (as shown in Appendix G Tables G-8 and G-36). Hence, even though the FEIS analysis includes additional sources of proposed GHGs, the total GHG estimations for the project alternatives in the FEIS are lower than those presented in the DEIS.

Climate change is a global effect or impact. As stated on DEIS page 5-33, currently, there are no formally adopted or published NEPA thresholds of significance for GHG emissions. The Marine Corps

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(and annoyance) that results from very intense but sporadic noise events caused by military jet flyovers. To make matters worse, it does not appear that the EIS measured aircraft noise while in combat mode – i.e., flying fast and at low altitude.<sup>11</sup> Instead, the EIS aircraft noise model was based on two aerial *refueling* tracks – one at 19,000 feet AGL and one at 22,000 AGL. (EIS, 3.9-6)<sup>12</sup>. Again, this kind of modeling decision results in an underreporting of aircraft noise impacts.

We would point out that using the CNEL metric *does* make sense when determining noise impacts near the Combat Center airports, where the number of flight operations is high enough to warrant time-averaging. It just doesn't make sense when determining noise impacts in those areas affected by combat training flights.

In addition, the EIS fails to analyze adequately the effect of project-related noise on wildlife. The EIS's discussion on this topic is remarkably brief and general, even though military operations such as artillery firing, ordnance explosions, combat flights, and tank and troop movements generate the kind of high-intensity noise that frightens wildlife and may disrupt their normal behaviors. For example, according to Figure 3.1-8 of the EIS, the Noise Study included only two (2) "points of interest" located within the WSA. This demonstrates that the Noise Study was focused exclusively on impacts to humans, ignoring entirely the Project's potentially devastating noise effects on animals in the desert.<sup>13</sup> Birds, reptiles, ungulates (and other mammals) all are highly-sensitive to sound changes. Given the number of wildlife species in the proposed acquisitions areas (especially the WSA) – including the federally-threatened desert tortoise – the EIS should provide a more thorough and searching analysis of the Project's potential to cause noise-related impacts on biological resources.

**D. The EIS's Biological Impacts Analysis is Inadequate**

Available data from the BLM and other sources show that the WSA is home to a wide array of sensitive plant and wildlife species, including the desert tortoises. Yet the EIS does not indicate where these species are located within the WSA; nor does it overlay the proposed military training exercises onto species maps to determine where potential conflicts might arise. Without such overlays, it is impossible for the public (and the Marine Corps) to know with any kind of precision whether the proposed MEB training activities will kill, injure, disrupt, or displace sensitive plants and animals. This is not a speculative concern. The Marine Corps,

<sup>11</sup> The EIS admits that, with the Project, "[o]verflights would increase within existing and proposed airspace and could operate at lower altitudes than currently allowed in specified areas. (EIS, 4.1-5). However, the EIS does not measure the noise impacts of such overflights.

<sup>12</sup> Unlike refueling operations, bombing and strafing runs occur at very low altitudes.

<sup>13</sup> See, EIS at 3.9-1 [Describing noise metrics as measuring sound in relation to *human* sensitivities.]

NOI-1

BIO-1

BIO-2

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**AQ-1 Continued:**

chooses to use the U.S. GHG inventory as an indicator of the baseline for global GHG emissions on which to compare proposed GHG emissions. This comparison is deemed adequate to determine the significance of proposed GHG emissions for NEPA purposes. The fact that the Marine Corps utilized one of the approved methods for demonstrating conformity that resulted in a commitment from the MDAQMD to account for criteria emissions in their next attainment planning budget bears no legal nexus to what standards should be used to determine the significance of project GHG emissions.

**SOC-1:**

The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**WAT-1:**

Section 3.13.1 of the EIS states that all naturally occurring, surface water features are ephemeral and contain water only during and after infrequent rain events. The EIS also states that no information is

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during the planned MEB exercises, intends to activate 15,000 to 20,000 troops, backed by tanks and other vehicles, and engage in live-fire combat training. This will involve hundreds of thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition, artillery rounds, tank rounds, and missiles delivered from aircraft. The exercise areas will effectively be transformed into highly-violent war zones. In such a situation, there is no question that existing wildlife will be killed or injured or, at the very least, displaced. However, the EIS provides very little information on this subject.

Perhaps the Marine Corps is assuming the Section 7 Biological Opinion will cover these issues. If so, the assumption is unfounded. First, the Biological Opinion, when completed, will only address potential impacts on federally-listed species – i.e., the desert tortoise. No other species will be covered. Second, the Biological Opinion is required under the Endangered Species Act; it does not satisfy the Marine Corps' separate and independent obligation under NEPA to disclose impacts to biological resources.

Part of the problem is that the Marines, in preparing the EIS, conducted very few wildlife studies of the 180,000-acre WSA. According to Table 3.10-1 of the EIS, the Marines performed the following biological resource surveys in the WSA: (1) one survey for special status plants in 2008, (2) one survey for reptiles and burrowing owl in 2008, and (3) one survey for Mojave ground squirrel in 2008. No bird surveys (other than for burrowing owl) were conducted. No mammal surveys (other than for Mojave ground squirrel) were conducted. There was no attempt to identify and locate bat roosts. Insects were not surveyed at all. As a result, the EIS does not provide a complete or reliable inventory of the various plant and wildlife species that exist in the WSA, even though the BLM possesses much of this information.<sup>14</sup>

The EIS also fails to discuss the potential for lead and other chemicals from expended ordnance to enter the water supply used by wildlife or to accumulate in the plant materials eaten by wildlife.

Another shortcoming of the EIS biological impacts analysis is that it tends to focus myopically on the desert tortoise and pays scant attention to the other sensitive species in the

<sup>14</sup> Although Figure 3.10-5 of the EIS purports to depict the vegetation communities of the West, East, and South studies areas, the vegetative mapping for the WSA so coarse as to be worthless. The EIS itself admits that "[i]n]like the Combat Center and the other two acquisition study areas, plant communities have not been mapped to a high level of detail within the entirety of the west study area." (EIS, 3.10-34) In fact, only 57% of the WSA has been subjected to high-quality mapping. With respect to where in the WSA certain wildlife species reside, Table 3.10-7 provides only the most general information. For example, when discussing the desert tortoise, the table indicates that the species "[o]ccurs in suitable habitat throughout the west study area." As to the Mojave fringe-toad lizard, the table states that this species "[o]ccurs in the southern portion of the west study area." For purposes of determining whether the military activities contemplated under the proposed Project will affect these species and their habitat, such vague statements have almost no value.

BIO-2

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WAT-1 Continued:

available on existing water quality conditions associated with intermittent wet areas (washes and playas) at the Combat Center. It is likely that water quality for intermittent flows is influenced by the amounts of suspended sediment and/or dissolved salts, which are expected to vary for different substrate types, such as bedrock, alluvial fans, and playa surfaces.

The impacts to ephemeral streams or intermittent washes are discussed on page 4.13-5 in section 4.13.2.1. The EIS mentions that exercises avoid playas to the extent possible. Specifically, "Combat Center Order 5090.1D (MAGTF Training Command 2006) provides general guidance for avoiding impacts to natural resources, as well as specific guidance for avoiding disturbance of playas or other sensitive areas. The existing INRMP and compliance under Combat Center Order 5090.1D applies to existing and continued use in the Combat Center and would be expanded to cover the acquisition areas."

AQ-2:

The purpose of the consideration of the Combat Center year 2002 emissions in the DEIS is to accurately identify the future baseline conditions upon initiation of the proposed action in 2014 or 2015. The level of 2002 emissions at the Combat Center, plus emissions from the proposed MEB Building Block training exercises, would not be expected to exceed the Combat Center year 2009 emissions. This determination enabled the air quality analysis to focus on impacts from the MEB Exercises, and to compare these impacts to the most recent Combat Center emissions inventory (2009).

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affected areas. This is not to say that impacts on the tortoise are unimportant. On the contrary, they are critically important, and this Project has the potential to “take” scores of tortoises annually, possibly upsetting the fragile state of the species’ recovery. However, the tortoise is *not* an umbrella species for all or even most of the other wildlife in the study areas. Therefore, the EIS must give a full accounting of potential impacts on all sensitive birds, mammals (including bats), reptiles, amphibians, and insects that use or reside in these parts of the Mojave Desert.

With respect to Project impacts on the desert tortoise, the EIS has major baseline data problems. In recent years, tortoise experts and statisticians have realized that survey methods used in the 1980s and 1990s, including the manner in which transects were run, produced unreliable results. In fact, data from surveys conducted prior to 2005 are largely unusable; and they certainly cannot be mixed with or compared to data from surveys conducted from 2005 onward. However, this is exactly the error that the EIS makes in its tortoise analysis. For tortoise densities on the *Combat Center*, the EIS relies on strip transect surveys conducted in 1997 and 1999. (EIS, 3.10-24) For tortoise densities in the *WSA*, the EIS relies on tortoise sign surveys conducted in 2009. (EIS, 3.10-41) The EIS then tries to compare these two data sets, which any tortoise expert knows is a dubious exercise.

About the only meaningful conclusion to be drawn from the tortoise data derived from surveys of the *Combat Center* is that base operations have resulted in significant reductions in tortoise density, at least compared to similar habitat areas adjacent to the base – e.g., those in *WSA*. In light of this, the proposed Project, if implemented in the *WSA*, may cause similar tortoise declines in the expansion area. The EIS does not really tackle this issue. Instead, it suggests that there will be no net change in threats to the tortoise, since the Project would displace existing OHV activities. However, this is an oversimplified and inaccurate analysis. There is no data indicating that OHV use in the *WSA* (Johnson Valley) has resulted in perceptible declines in tortoise populations. In fact, tortoise densities in Johnson Valley have been and remain significantly higher than tortoise densities on the *Combat Center* (allowing, of course, for discrepancies in the survey methods and data).

Finally, on the matter of the Project’s anticipated “take” of tortoises, the EIS states that under Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative), the Project, over its 50-year life, would result in the take of between 154 and 714 tortoises at the base. (Table 4.10-10)<sup>15</sup> This is quite a large range. Although the Biological Opinion for this Project has not yet been released, it would be unusual for the USFWS to issue an Incidental Take Statement (“ITS”) where the “take” range is so wide. The Marines must conduct a more thorough study of potential “take” to predict with greater

<sup>15</sup> These figures include “take” of tortoises in the *Combat Center* as well as the proposed acquisition areas. (See Table 4.10-10)

BIO-2

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AQ-2 Continued:

Therefore, year 2002 is not some arbitrary point in the past, as stated in the comment. Text has been added to Section 4.8 of the EIS to clarify assumptions used in the analysis.

AQ-3:

The method utilized by the Marine Corps to demonstrate conformity in this case is specifically prescribed by MDAQMD Rule 2002(H)(1)(e). The SIP revision method for demonstrating conformity was not pre-decisional because, at the time that the conformity analysis was submitted to the MDAQMD, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources had been dedicated to any of the project alternatives. Moreover, the similarity of the air impacts associated with each alternative and the flexibility of the consultation process ensures that no particular institutional bias supported the preferred alternative or any other alternative. In short, both the Marine Corps and the State of California were free to disapprove the preferred alternative and to consider air impacts associated with other alternatives. That flexibility remains to this day.

The following discussion illustrates the 9th Circuit’s approach to timing of NEPA analysis: “As provided in the regulations promulgated to implement NEPA, ‘agencies shall integrate the NEPA process with other planning *at the earliest possible time* to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts.’ 40 C.F.R. § 1501.2 (emphasis added); *see also id.* § 1502.5 (‘An agency shall commence preparation of an [EIS] as close as possible to the time the agency is developing or is presented with a proposal....’).

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precision that actual number of tortoise that will be lost as a result of the Project. Without such a thorough study, the EIS is inadequate. Further, without a more exact range of potential take, the USFWS will not be able to issue a Biological Opinion and ITS that comply with Section 7 of the ESA. We would also point out that any project with the potential to “take” more than 14 federally-listed desert tortoises per year cannot be described as having “no significant effects” on biological resources.<sup>16</sup> In addition, nothing in the EIS indicates that the proposed mitigation measures, including those to be developed and included in the not-yet-released Biological Opinion, will reduce the number of tortoises “taken” as a result of the Project.

**E. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project Impacts on Recreation**

The EIS concludes correctly that the proposed Project, if implemented in the WSA, will have a significant effect on outdoor recreation. However, on the issue of recreation impacts, the EIS makes certain erroneous assumptions that result in a skewed assessment of project alternatives. Specifically, the EIS assumes that the number of “dispersed use” visitor days lost under Alternative 6 (the “Preferred Project”) will be the same as the number lost under Alternatives 4 and 5. (EIS, Table 4.2-4) This is almost certainly incorrect, given that under Alternative 6 only 44% of the Johnson Valley OHV area would be available for part-time public use (through the proposed Restricted Public Access program), whereas under Alternatives 4 and 5 the entire Johnson Valley OHV area (100%) would be available for part-time public use. The difference is not inconsequential, as it amounts to more than 106,000 acres of land. Given that “dispersed use” means exactly that – *dispersed use* – it is irrational to assume that the 82,802 acres available for public use under Alternative 6 will accommodate the same number of visitors as the 189,470 acres available for public use under Alternatives 4 and 5. The more reasonable assumption is that a significant percentage of potential visitors will bypass Johnson Valley rather than be crowded into the small area provided under the RPAA for Alternative 6.

It is critical that this analytical error be corrected, because it infects the EIS’s assessment of the project’s impacts on (1) recreational use displacement, and (2) socio-economic conditions. This is easily explained. If fewer OHV users visit Johnson Valley under Alternative 6 than under Alternative 4 or 5, those users will likely travel to some other OHV venue, taking their dollars with them. The EIS, therefore, must evaluate this “displacement” scenario for impacts on natural resources at the “substitute” venue(s) and for the economic loss suffered by local businesses near Johnson Valley. Note also that the EIS’s discussion of recreational displacement impacts generally is very poor, even though data included in the EIS indicate that the proposed Project will contribute to the 30-year trend of reducing the space available for OHV-related recreation. (See Figure 3.2-6) During that period, acreage available for OHV recreation

<sup>16</sup> The Alternative 6 take figures set forth in Table 4.10-10 amortize to an estimated take of between 3.08 and 14.28 tortoises *per year*.

BIO-2

REC-1

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AQ-3 Continued:

Furthermore, (the Ninth Circuit) has interpreted these regulations as requiring agencies to prepare NEPA documents, such as an EA or an EIS, ‘before any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.’ *Conner v. Burford*, 848 F.2d 1441, 1446 (9th Cir. 1988); *see also EDF v. Andrus*, 596 F.2d 848, 852 (9th Cir. 1979).” *Metcalf v. Daley*, 214 F.3d 1135, 1143 (9th Cir. 2001).

In this case, only the emissions associated with the approved alternative were submitted to the air quality experts for their review and approval. However, any of the six alternatives could be subjected to the same or similar analysis if it were chosen, even still to this day. Only one alternative was submitted in order to maintain administrative efficiency and avoid unnecessary work requests to the State agencies. No irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources were (or are) dedicated to the preferred alternative when the conformity analyses were submitted to the State and Federal air quality experts.

Neither MDAQMD Rule 2002 nor Part 93 of Title 40 of the CFR requires the EPA to formally approve the conformity analysis for this project. The Marine Corps provided EPA Region IX with its conformity analysis along with all other required recipients discussed in Rule 2002(E)&(F). This included publishing notice of the availability of the conformity analysis in locally published newspapers.

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decreased by 48%; the proposed Project would effectively close the Johnson Valley OHV area, removing another 180,000 acres from public recreational use. The loss of so much recreational land simply shunts more people and more vehicles onto the few open areas that remain, placing added stress on their human and environmental resources, and effectively ruining the “wilderness experience” of those seeking an escape from urban life. These secondary impacts of the Project are real and the EIS must analyze them in detail. Currently, however, it fails to do so.

The EIS also provides little assurance that the Marine Corps will not arbitrarily close the RPAA area contemplated under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6. Nothing in the EIS or the Project generally indicates that this would not or could not happen. On the contrary, the EIS does not even describe the conditions under which such a closure would be allowed. Instead, the decision to close the RPAA appears to rest solely with the Marine Corps, with no right to appeal. In light of this fact, the EIS should (but does not) disclose that the Project’s recreation impacts under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6 may ultimately be identical to those of Alternative 1.

**F. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The EIS includes a greenhouse gas (GHG) discussion (as part of the Cumulative Impacts analysis), but does not present a meaningful assessment of the project’s GHG impacts. First, the EIS fails to provide a GHG inventory for the Combat Center, so there is no means to determine the base’s existing carbon footprint or to calculate how much that footprint will grow once the Project is implemented. This kind of “project-to-ground” assessment is central to every NEPA analysis. Second, the EIS, for purposes of determining impact significance, compares the Project’s GHG emissions against the total GHG inventory of the entire United States. Not surprisingly, the Project’s contribution to the national total is very small, amounting to .00014%. Based on this number, the EIS concludes that the Project will have an insignificant impact on global climate change. (EIS, 5-33) Such an analysis is meaningless and unhelpful. No conceivable project – no matter how much GHG it might generate – will contribute more than a fraction of a percent to the national inventory of GHG emissions. Using the EIS’s logic, then, no project would ever make a significant contribution to global climate change. For this reason, the significance criterion used in the EIS is invalid.

Regardless of whether the EPA or any other federal agency has established significance thresholds for GHG emissions, the Marine Corps can and must develop significance criteria that are meaningful for this EIS. Ironically, the proposed project is located in the one state in the Union that has developed standards for evaluating GHG emissions on a project-by-project basis. The Marines should take advantage of this and use California’s standards for determining the significance of the Project’s GHG emissions. In fact, given that the Marines have asked for – and received – permission from the Mojave Air Pollution Control District to be included in the

REC-1

AQ-1

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AQ-3 Continued:

Section I, Last Paragraph: Although there have been informal suggestions that particulate matter (PM) could play a role in Upper Respiratory Tract Disease, there is no published literature that demonstrates a linkage. Therefore, inclusion of such a statement would be speculative. However, please note that text in the Final EIS has been revised to mention the potential for impacts to tortoises and other animals due to reduced plant productivity associated with dust deposition on leaf surfaces (see Wildlife, Desert Tortoise impact discussions). Note that the author of the studies on productivity and dust deposition noted that the summer rainstorms typical of the west Mojave ameliorate much of the dust impact (Sharifi 1999).

AQ-4:

Compliance with ambient air quality standards is determined by estimating the impacts of proposed emissions to “public lands” and not within the “facility” that contains these emissions. In the case of the DEIS PM<sub>10</sub> dispersion modeling analyses, the “facility” is defined as any location within the Combat Center boundaries proposed by each project alternative. Any location outside of these boundaries is considered to be “public lands”. The focus of the dispersion modeling analysis is to identify the maximum project PM<sub>10</sub> impact on public lands, which would occur immediately outside of these boundaries. This is the case, as due to the nature of atmospheric dispersion, “PM<sub>10</sub> disperses quickly over distance”, as acknowledged by the commenter. Therefore, the DEIS and project PM<sub>10</sub> conformity determination did not under-report modeled PM<sub>10</sub> impacts.

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District's portion of the California State Implementation Plan, GGH emissions from the Combat Center and the proposed Project should be assessed using California's standards.

**G. The EIS Provides a Skewed Assessment of the Project's Adverse Impacts on the Local Economy**

The EIS contends that the Project will add 70 personnel to the existing population at the Combat Center, and that these 70 individuals will generate, collectively, \$4.5 million in county-wide spending, thus off-setting the economic losses caused by shutting down the Johnson Valley OHV area. This claim is hard to square with the fact that, according to the EIS, Johnson Valley OHV area experiences approximately 300,000 visitor days per year. (See, EIS, Table 3.2-9)<sup>17</sup> For the EIS's claim to be valid, each visitor would have to spend less than \$15 per day. This contradicts Table 3.3-8 of the EIS, which indicates that the average person spends more than \$31.00 per visitor use day.

The \$4.5 million attributed to new base employee spending, while not inconsequential, cannot compete with the \$338.8 million (in 2003 dollars) generated by recreational visitation, including OHV-related recreation, in the Mojave Desert Region. (See EIS Table 3.3-7, citing Economic Benefits study conducted by California Department of Parks and Recreation.)

More important, however, is the fact that the Project will have a disproportionate and devastating economic impact on those communities closest to, and most dependent on, the Johnson Valley OHV area – e.g., Lucerne Valley. (See, Table 4.3-13)<sup>18</sup> The EIS speculates that these businesses will be able to make up the difference by serving non-OHV visitors on their way to Big Bear Lake. (EIS, 4.3-9) However, there is no evidence to support this contention. The EIS also argues that because Lucerne Valley has historically experienced a 20% turnover rate in its businesses, the community is accustomed to economic fluctuations and will adjust to the new reality occasioned by the project. (EIS, 4.3-9) Based on this rather flip analysis, the EIS concludes that the Project will not have a significant impact on Lucerne Valley or other local economies. Such a conclusion reflects both insensitivity to and ignorance of the economic

<sup>17</sup> We believe the 300,000 annual visitor use day figure used is low by a factor of at least two. The figure is comes from the BLM, which historically underreports visitor numbers. Further, as pointed out in the EIS, Johnson Valley has a number of entry and exit points, most of which are not monitored by BLM. As a result, many visitors are never counted and the durations of their visits are not determined.

<sup>18</sup> According to Table 4.3-13, the Project, under Alternative 6 (the Preferred Project), would reduce recreational and film spending in the local community by 24.6% and local tax revenues by 24.7%. Given the small profit margins of most small businesses, this kind of drop in revenues would be devastating.

AQ-1

SOC-1

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**NEPA-6:**

The proposed action and alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Although the No-Action Alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action, it has been carried forward for analysis in the EIS as described in Chapter 4 under each resource area. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**NEPA-7:**

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**NEPA-8:**

In accordance with NEPA, the EIS discloses and analyzes the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives under each resource area, as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS.

**AQ-5:**

Comment noted. The FEIS includes definitions of sensitive receptors and qualitatively discusses how proposed air emissions would impact these receptors.

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realities facing the business owners (and employees) of Lucerne Valley and the other towns that rely on OHV-related revenues.

SOC-1

**H. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Water Quality**

As shown in Figure 3.13-1 of the EIS, the WSA is laced with washes, rivulets, and dry lake beds that receive and/or convey water during rain events. In addition, much of the WSA overlies groundwater aquifers. These water sources are critical to the vegetation and wildlife in the WSA. The EIS, however, does not describe the existing water quality conditions at these water sources. Nor does it provide anything more than a superficial analysis of the proposed Project's potential to contaminate these water sources with munitions constituents (MC) and hydrocarbons from fuel discharges.

WAT-1

**I. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Air Quality**

**1. Baseline Emissions.**

The method used to perform the Air Quality impacts analysis is highly-suspect. For example, when establishing baseline pollutant levels (including those for PM<sub>10</sub>), the EIS uses emissions levels from the Combat Center as measured in 2002, even though emissions data from 2009 are available. Of course, the 2009 emissions are substantially higher. The EIS discounts these, however, claiming that "the high levels of existing training exercises at the Combat Center would revert back to pre-war levels (before 2003)." (EIS, 4.8-2) There is no evidence offered in support of this assumption; and for purposes of NEPA, baseline conditions are those which exist at the time the EIS is being prepared, not those that existed at some arbitrary point in the past.

AQ-2

**2. Ozone.**

The EIS acknowledges that the proposed Project will generate ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) in quantities that exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), thereby requiring that the Marines subject the Project to a "conformity analysis." (EIS, 4.8-6) In this case, however, the Marines did not perform a conformity analysis at all. Instead, they requested that the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District ("MDAQMD") and the California Air Resources Board ("CARB") "include these emissions from Alternative 6 into the next O<sub>3</sub> SIP revision for the MDAB (MDAQMD 2010a and ARB 2011)." (*Ibid.*)<sup>19</sup> According to the EIS, this will ensure

AQ-3

<sup>19</sup> See also EIS, 4.8-18.

Comment ID: N-18713 (Page 17 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 17 of 20):

GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 24, 2011  
Page 17

that Alternative 6 conforms to the SIP, thereby eliminating the “significance” of the Project’s ozone impacts.

There are two problems with this analysis. First, it was “pre-decisional” and therefore unlawful for the Marines to request that the MDAQMD and/or CARB include the ozone emissions from Alternative 6 (or any alternative) in the revised SIP. By making such a request, the Marines have signaled that they intend to adopt Alternative 6, regardless of the NEPA process. In other words, the current NEPA process is a sham and a charade. The die is already cast and the Marines will not be diverted from Alternative 6, no matter what the environmental analysis might show.

Second, any SIP revision – including the one requested by the Marines for this Project – must be approved by the U.S. EPA; and there is no evidence that this has occurred. Note, too, that EPA approval, especially with respect to local changes to SIPs, is never guaranteed. As the Imperial County Air Quality District recently discovered, EPA is more than willing to disapprove any portion of a SIP revision with which it disagrees. In light of these facts, it is incorrect to assume that the Project – i.e., Alternative 6 – conforms to the SIP for ozone.

3. Particulate Matter.

The EIS also acknowledges that the Project will generate more PM<sub>10</sub> than the NAAQSs allow. (EIS, 4.8-6; 4.8-18) To address this impact, the EIS purports to conduct a conformity analysis pursuant to MDAQMD Rule 2202(H)(1)(d)(i). (EIS, 4.8-18) In this analysis, the EIS concludes that, under Project conditions, PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations at the boundary separating the WSA and the Combat Center would be 97 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. When these emissions are added to background concentrations of 52 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, the cumulative total concentration of PM<sub>10</sub> is 149 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, just under the 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> NAAQS of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

What makes this conclusion dubious, however, is that the Project’s PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, while measured at the WSA boundary, do not actually occur at that location or reach their highest concentration there. According to the EIS, emissions will be highest during the so-called “Final Exercise,” which will take place “in close proximity to the boundary of the Combat Center.” (EIS, 4.8-19) The EIS does not define “close proximity,” but it is safe to assume that it means the exercise will not take place on the boundary itself, which is where the air quality model makes its measurements. Because PM<sub>10</sub> disperses quickly over distance, the actual emissions generated by the Final Exercise will not be fully captured if measured or modeled at

AQ-3

AQ-4

Comment ID: N-18713 (Page 18 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 18 of 20):

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the WSA/Combat Center boundary line.<sup>20</sup> As a result, the PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations described in the EIS are underreported. This, of course, directly affects the conformity determination, because if the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> emissions were measured/modeled at the source – i.e., at the Final Exercise ground location – rather than at the WSA/Combat Center boundary, total PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations would surely exceed the NAAQS threshold of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the EIS conclusion regarding the “insignificance” of the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> is in error.

Then there is the matter of dust and PM<sub>10</sub> impacts on biological resources, especially the desert tortoise. As acknowledged in the EIS, the desert tortoises in the Mojave are susceptible to upper respiratory tract disease (URTD), which can be fatal. The EIS, however, fails to assess the extent to which dust and PM<sub>10</sub> from the Project could make tortoises more vulnerable to URTD or other diseases. In addition, the EIS includes data demonstrating that project-related dust could substantially disrupt photosynthesis of desert plants, thus reducing their productivity. (EIS, 4.10-5) What the EIS fails to evaluate, however, is whether the dust impacts on plant productivity will have secondary adverse effects on available forage and shelter for desert tortoises. This issue must be addressed in the Final EIS.

AQ-4

**J. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Discussion of the No-Action Alternative**

The EIS fails to provide an adequate description of the No-Action Alternative; nor does it explain why the No-Action Alternative would frustrate the basic mission of the Marines. In fact, the EIS is largely dismissive of this alternative, even though NEPA *requires* that it be analyzed and considered. Worse, because the EIS does not provide a clear description of the No-Action Alternative and its effects, it is difficult to compare the other alternatives to it. Finally, the EIS should explore the possibility of improving MEB training within the confines of the No-Action Alternative. For reasons not explained in the document, this concept was not analyzed in the EIS. Note that this analysis must include a cost-benefit component.

NEPA-6

**K. The EIS Fails to Recommend Feasible Mitigation Measures to Offset Significant Impacts; EIS Findings of “Infeasibility” are Not Supported by Sufficient Evidence**

The EIS identifies a multitude of significant impacts that will result from the proposed Project. Only in the rarest of cases, however, does the EIS recommend mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those impacts. In all other instances (and most notably in the discussion of impacts to OHV recreation), the EIS simply concludes, without evidence or analysis, that the

NEPA-7

<sup>20</sup> The EIS itself admits that “PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations quickly decrease with distance from the Combat Center boundary.” (EIS, 4.8-20)

GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP  
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Marine Corps could not identify feasible mitigation measures and therefore does not intend to implement any. NEPA does not allow federal agencies, even the military, to sidestep their mitigation obligations so easily. For each significant impact of the proposed Project, the Marines must develop mitigation measures or demonstrate – *with evidence* – that such measures cannot be reasonable undertaken. The Draft EIS, as currently written, does not meet this standard.

With respect to the Project significant effects on OHV recreation, the EIS cannot credibly argue that no feasible mitigation measures exist to offset these impacts. On the contrary, mitigation for such impacts is not only feasible, it's easy: The Marines can simply provide money to BLM and/or the OHV Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR") to purchase land near Johnson Valley for use as an OHV recreation area. Not only is the western Mojave Desert dotted with private in-holdings that could be acquired for this purpose, the OHV Division of State Parks has an actual program for purchasing such properties and turning them into OHV parks. So the EIS is incorrect in stating that there is no feasible means to mitigate the Project's impacts on recreation.

**L. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Description of the Project**

The EIS does not quantify the extent to which the proposed Project will increase military training operations when compared to existing conditions. That is, the EIS fails to calculate and disclose the net increase in flight operations, tank miles traveled, troop exercises, ordnance expended, etc. resulting from the proposed Project. For this reason, it is impossible to fully comprehend the Project's potential impacts on the environment.

**M. The EIS Fails to Assess Project Impacts on Sensitive Receptors Within the Combat Center**

The Combat Center at Twenty-nine Palms supports more than just combat troops conducting training exercises. It is a comprehensive military installation with on-base housing, on-base shopping centers and restaurants, and on-base civilians. Nevertheless, the EIS fails to address the Project's potential impacts on (1) Combat Center civilians, and (2) Combat Center troops not engaged in Project-related training exercises. Given that the Project will generate substantial noise and air pollution at the Combat Center, this is a major omission that must be corrected.

**CONCLUSION**

As discussed above, the proposed Project cannot be justified in terms of military necessity or cost. And the EIS prepared in support of the Project simply does not meet the minimum analytical standards established under NEPA and controlling case law. In light of

NEPA-7

NEPA-8

AQ-5

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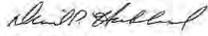
Response to Comment N-18713 (Page 20 of 20):

GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 24, 2011  
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these facts, EcoLogic hereby registers its opposition to the Project and request that the Marine Corps scale back substantially its desire to expand the base at Twenty-Nine Palms.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Project and the Draft EIS. If you have any questions concerning the content of this letter, please contact me at the address or phone number listed above.

Very truly yours,

  
David P Hubbard  
of  
Gatzke Dillon & Ballance LLP

DPH:rlf

**Comment ID: N-18714 (Page 1 of 2)**

Comment ID: N-18714  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

George & Frances Alderson  
112 Hilton Avenue  
Baltimore, Maryland 21228

May 22, 2011

NAVFAC Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Dear Project Manager:

Please include this letter as our comment on the draft EIS for the expansion of the US Marine Corps 29 Palms training base. I (George) had duties at military facilities in the California Desert during my service in the US Air Force, although I never was at 29 Palms. My mother grew up near Bakersfield and traveled all over this area.

We compliment the US Marine Corps on the environmental impact statement. We appreciate the Corps' systematic approach to this project. We have no preference among the alternatives. However, we submit the following comments on several points.

**Comment Opportunities**

We notice that ORV fans are protesting that the postal address for comments was not publicized adequately. Where have they been? We received a postcard from the USMC at the start of the comment period giving the NAVFAC San Diego address very clearly. A USMC press release dated February 25, 2011, contained the same address. We think the Marine Corps has been forthright in seeking comments and directing them to the San Diego address. There has been plenty of time to study the EIS and prepare comments during the 90 days provided. We would not favor an extension. It's time to get on with the project in the interest of national defense.

**Alternatives**

We think the six action alternatives are well conceived and are responsive to the comments during the scoping period. Alternative 6 responds to the concerns expressed by ORV buffs by providing shared use of the Johnson Valley area. It allows ORV riders to continue their recreation when that area is not in use for Marine training.

Elsewhere offroaders have grudgingly accepted limitations on their use of federal lands—usually after loudly complaining and sometimes after suing the agency. On most national forests and BLM public lands, ORVs are limited to designated routes, and seasonal closures are used to avoid excessive impacts in winter.

**Add Mitigation Measures**

Alternative 6 needs improvement to guard against damage to the lands and resources by ORVs used illegally. Both BLM and the Forest Service have had serious problems preventing rogue riders from going off designated routes and creating new trails. These

**Response to Comment N-18714 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comments.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18714 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18714 (Page 2 of 2):

rogue trails lack the design features to prevent erosion, and they often run through sensitive wildlife habitat. Mitigation measures should be added to Alternative 6 to deter illegal riding and to rehabilitate lands abused by illegal riding. How will the USMC assure compliance with restrictions on ORV riding? What law enforcement agencies will pursue illegal riders? What agency will perform rehabilitation of damaged lands?

**Unreasonable Alternative**

ORV groups have suggested an *unreasonable* alternative that calls for the US Congress to repeal the protection of all or part of three wilderness areas: Sheephole Valley, Cleghorn Lakes, and Cadiz Dunes. The USMC was correct to exclude that idea from the EIS. Congress has dedicated those wilderness areas to protection of their wild character, wildlife populations and habitat, desert plants, and public use for recreation and inspiration. Their designation was a result of 18 years of consideration that started with the BLM wilderness inventory in 1976 under the mandate of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act and ended with enactment of the California Desert Protection Act of 1994, Public Law 103-433. Repealing the wilderness status of those areas does not deserve further consideration in this base expansion project.

**Reasonable Priorities**

The use of Johnson Valley for ORV recreation is not a high priority in the national interest. ORV travel has been curtailed in many parts of the California Desert to protect wildlife habitat, scenic values, and other public uses. This may be the time to end it at Johnson Valley in the interest of national defense.

We send our thanks once again to all who contributed to the EIS. Please keep us informed of further action on this project.

Sincerely,



George and Frances Alderson

**Comment ID: N-18715**

Comment ID: N-18715  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible.

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

  
Jeremy J. Wilson  
56610 Hidden Gold Dr.  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

**Response to Comment N-18715:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18716 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18716  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: LUCERNE VALLEY

DATE: 5-23-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice               | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources            |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

The People of the United States may be about to lose total access to two-thirds of Johnson Valley OHV Area, permanently. If so, this two-thirds will go to the 29 Palms Marine Training Area, permanently, with no access or use for any civilian purpose, ever again. This is unacceptable. Our OHV funds have been taken and used for purposes other than intended and now our largest single OHV area in Southern California is being threatened.

If this happens, Johnson Valleys OHV area would be reduced to a size too small to use for our most popular organized racing events. These hugely popular events plus the access to this unique landscape all year around, bring together tourists, businesses, OHV enthusiasts and more from California and many other states far and wide in record numbers year after year. This important tourism supports our local economy here in the High Desert with this OHV area acting as a pressure valve of sorts for the overcrowded residents of L.A. and in surrounding counties who use this space regularly.

There is plenty of uninhabited land to the east. Could you not expand towards the river? If this unwelcome expansion westward must be, can we get an off set? Can another area be opened or an adjacent area expanded? Can part of Kelso Dunes be added to the Razor OHV Area off I-15 near Soda Lake, for example? What will the State receive in payment for the Marines use of this proposed training area? Will any of this be available for local projects? Will the Desert Tortoise be relocated? How did the relocation from the expansion on Fort Irwin fare with the tortoise population? Finally, the Airline path over Lucerne Valley is within 10 miles of the proposed Marine Border. Is this a potential "accidental" target?

I have lived in Lucerne Valley for 22 years, blessed by the fact that it is dark at night and quiet. It is my hope that the destructive, invasive and disturbing rumbings of artillery will not be moving 19 miles closer to my home.

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18716 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an

**Comment ID: N-18716 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18716 (Page 2 of 2)**

annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18717

Comment ID: N-18717  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps  
ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
tal Impact Statement**

This letter is in regards to the proposed westward expansion of the 29 Palms Training Grounds. As the state of California certainly needs all the tax revenue it can get these days of economic woe, it seems counterproductive for the state to purchase roughly 40 square miles of private westward properties (I assume through Eminent Domain using taxpayer monies) rather than expanding to the east. Expanding westward would also remove these 40 square miles of private land from state property tax roles.

At the information meeting with the Marines in Victorville on April 14, 2011 I asked two different representatives what the Marines would pay for the use of this land they want to expand into towards the west and their answer was "Nothing". This proposal does not appear to benefit the state of California, delivering instead another financial blow.

This unwelcome move to the west will bring the training grounds much too close to the populated parts of the Mojave Desert, including Lucerne Valley, Apple Valley Victorville and Hesperia. The Marines see the land as uninhabited and useless for anything but a military training ground, yet I debate that these areas are incredibly scenic and unique and are already heavily used by the above populations for tourism and recreation, providing local revenue which would be sorely missed. These lands also are already a vital pressure valve of sorts for the entire population of the LA basin to let off steam as they get away from crowded conditions there.

All of these things deserve to be seriously considered as a decision is made about how these lands will be used. Finally, please consider the fact that directly to the east of 29 Palms lies the least populated and unused expanse of land in Southern California. Please do California a big favor and have the Marines expand towards the east.

1. NAME: SON BUSIT
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: 1180 POST OFFICE RD  
LUCERNE VALLEY CA 92356

Response to Comment N-18717:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18718

Response to Comment N-18718:

Comment ID: N-18718  
 Date Received: May 27, 2011  
 Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Final Impact Statement

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Center of Lucerne Valley, CA DATE: May 26, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise           | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I welcome the Marines, whether they expand east or west from their current space.

I was a small child when they were using the area in question during World War II and later into the late 1950's. We very seldom had any problems with excess noise from either artillery fire or aircraft - only low flying jets occasionally.

I am not sure where they get their gas or how they can afford it, but it seems as if as many or more off-road people come through on the weekends looking for recreation. And just because they are not in city traffic do not slow down for speed zones unless they are planning to stop.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): Private Citizen
3. ADDRESS:

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

**Comment ID: N-18719 (Page 1 of 5)**

Comment ID: N-18719  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

May 20, 2011  
15025 Montana Serena  
El Cajon CA 92021

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

To whom it may concern:

The EIS for the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base Expansion is fatally flawed because it does not comply with the Plain Writing Act of 2010.

That law was passed by Congress and signed by President Obama in October 2010.

<http://centerforplainlanguage.org/plain-writing-laws/plain-writing-act-of-2010/>

<http://abcnews.go.com/WN/obama-signs-law-understand/story?id=11902841>

Even though it does not take full effect until October 2011, your EIS must comply with this act to put this government publication into plain understandable English.

You must issue another draft EIS that is in compliance with this law.

The Final EIS to be published in December of this year must be in compliance with this law.

One way to make the second draft and final EIS comply is by using the attached interim guidelines recommended for government use by the Plain Writing experts.

Also, in this December 2009 document on Page 76, General Amos talks about expansion projects at Twentynine Palms, Guam and Georgia:

<http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-11...1sbrg53693.pdf>

He also says "at the direction of the Commandant, an initiative is underway to establish an overarching land acquisition strategy addressing current, emerging, and future training requirements and associated land and airspace needs (through 2060) to ensure the Marine Corps remains fully missioncapable."

It sounds like the Marines have other plans for more expansion in the future. These are not addressed in the EIS. You must include those as part of the future and cumulative impacts sections.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Lisa Vallance

**Response to Comment N-18719 (Page 1 of 5):**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18719 (Page 2 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18719 (Page 2 of 5):

The Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN) is a community of federal employees dedicated to the idea that citizens deserve clear communications from government. We first developed this document in the mid-90s. We continue to revise it every few years to provide updated advice on clear communication. We hope you find this document useful, and that it helps you improve your writing — and your agency's writing — so your users can:

- find what they need,
- understand what they find; and
- use what they find to meet their needs.

We've divided the document into five major topics, although many of the subtopics fit within more than one topic. We start with a discussion of your audience because you should think about them before you start to write your document or your web content. In fact, you should start to think about them before you start to plan. From there we move to organization, because developing a good organization is important during your planning stage. Next, we discuss writing principles, starting at the word level and moving up through paragraphs and sections. This is the most extensive topic. We follow principles of writing documents with principles of writing for the web. We conclude with a short discussion of testing techniques.

When we first wrote this document, we were primarily interested in regulations. We've broadened our coverage, but the document still bears the stamp of its origin. If you have a suggestion about something we should add to address other types of writing, or have a comment on this edition, contact us at [www.plainlanguage.gov/contactus.cfm](http://www.plainlanguage.gov/contactus.cfm).

Comment ID: N-18719 (Page 3 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18719 (Page 3 of 5):

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**Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 1 of 12)**

Comment ID: N-18720  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

May 25, 2011

From:

Mike Hawkins

57873 Ivanhoe Drive

Yucca Valley California 92284

Home Phone: 760 365-5983

Email: mphcdh2@wmconnect.com

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**Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 1 of 12):**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 2 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 2 of 12):

May, 25 2011

From:

Mike Hawkins

57873 Ivanhoe Drive

Yucca Valley California 92284

To:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest

ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager

1220 Pacific Highway

San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The Executive Summary on Page 4 explains why the USMC is proposing the establishment of a large-scale training facility at MCAGCC 29Palms. It says the Marine Corps has a requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Air Ground Task Force, and the existing facilities are inadequate.

The underlying strategy was designed over a decade ago. Times and technology have changed. It appears the very foundation for this strategy is changing.

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 3 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 3 of 12):

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/gates-time-has-come-to/>

Posted by SWJ Editors on August 13, 2010 4:01 AM

**Gates Orders Marine Corps Force Structure Review** by Jim Garamone of American Forces Press Service. An excerpt follows:

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered a thorough force structure review of the Marine Corps to determine what an expeditionary force in readiness should look like in the 21st century.

There are questions about the mission of the Marine Corps, Gates said. Before World War II, the Marines very successfully conducted “small wars” in the western hemisphere. The service also developed the rationale and logistics needed to conduct amphibious warfare.

During World War II, the Corps was wholly dedicated to landing on the beaches in the South and Central Pacific. America’s first offensive of World War II was when Marines landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal and began the campaign against Japan in August 1942. Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are just a few of the landings Marines made.

Since then, Marines have fought on the beaches, mountains and trenches of Korea, the highlands and rice paddies of Vietnam, and the deserts of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although many of these operations saw Marines initially projected from the sea, “they soon turned into long, grinding, ground engagements,” Gates said.

The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time.

Also see Gates: Time Has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and Defense Chief Gates Orders Review of Marines

**Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 4 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 4 of 12):**

Role by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times.

A **more recent article** dated Mar. 2, 2011, says that Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, spoke to news media about the 2010 Force Structure Review (formed to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of the Marine Corps and its role within the joint force in a fiscally-restrained post-Afghanistan environment; and I quote).

Two of the recommendations from the Review are:

A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,800 when conditions in Afghanistan warrant, and

Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental headquarters from eight to seven; infantry battalions from 27-24); a reduction in cannon artillery battalions (nine to seven; but a reorganization of batteries to support distributed operations), and a reduction in armor (10 companies to 8).

See more at

<http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/Pages/RestoringbalanceinMarineCorps.aspx>

**The Force Structure Review** of 2010 itself is attached. Its objectives do not jibe with the objectives stated for the MCAGCC expansion.

The very foundation for this Draft Environmental Impact Study is outdated.

Page 4 even says that the training requirement is drawn from an earlier Marine Strategy 21 for 2000.

Page 77 Land Use Requirements Study was completed in July of 2005 and based on the earlier training requirements.

On Page 78 it is stated:

**Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 5 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 5 of 12):**

Otherwise the entire document must be discarded as it is based on outdated decisions and information.

Thank you for your attention,

Mike Hawkins

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Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 6 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 6 of 12):

**Reshaping America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness**

**Report of the 2010 Marine Corps  
Force Structure Review Group**

March 14, 2011

  
For media inquiries please contact: Colonel Thomas V. Johnson, USMC, Marine Corps Combat  
Development Command (MCCDC) Director of Public Affairs, (703) 432-0304

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 7 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 7 of 12):

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters, United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20350-3000

14 March 2011

**Foreword**

In the fall of 2010 the Marine Corps conducted a Force Structure Review (FSR) to evaluate and refine the organization, posture and capabilities required of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness in a post-OEF security environment. The FSR was conducted by senior field grade officers and civilian Marines under the direct cognizance of an executive steering group comprised of the Deputy Commandants, the Commanders of Marine Corps Forces Command and Marine Corps Forces Pacific, and the Commanding Generals of our Marine Expeditionary Forces. The participants of the FSR brought extensive operational experience across the range of military operations, along with a deep breadth of knowledge regarding capabilities, force organization, training and education, equipment, deployment, employment and sustainment to inform the process. Additionally, numerous subject matter experts from within and outside the Marine Corps contributed their knowledge and insights to the FSR. The work was routinely reviewed and guided by me and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

This report is promulgated to promote understanding and to start implementation of FSR recommendations. Additional analysis through established capability development constructs will determine the how and timeline of the execution and implementation of FSR decisions.

  
JAMES F. AMOR  
General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

**Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 8 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 8 of 12):**

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Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 9 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 9 of 12):

**Reshaping America's  
Expeditionary Force in Readiness  
Report of the 2010 Marine Corps  
Force Structure Review Group**

*"The Marine Corps is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness—a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged: shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crisis, with today's force ... TODAY. Responsive and scalable, we team with other services, allies and interagency partners. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A middleweight force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independent of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats—irregular, hybrid, conventional—or the shady areas where they overlap. Marines are ready to respond whenever the Nation calls ... wherever the President may direct."*

—General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps

Purpose

The 2010 Marine Corps Force Structure Review convened to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness and affirm its role within the joint force in a complex and uncertain post-OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-Afghanistan security environment that is going to be further challenged by fiscal constraints.

Geostrategic Challenge

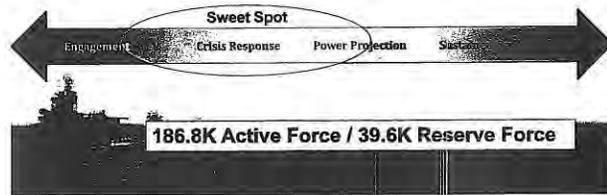
The geostrategic environment has changed dramatically in the last two decades, shifting from a competition between superpowers to a world of increasing instability and conflict, characterized by poverty, competition for resources, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism. Failed states or those that cannot adequately govern their territory can become safe havens for terrorist, insurgent and criminal groups that threaten the U.S. and our allies. Characterized by inherently unpredictable hybrid threats that combine irregular and conventional capabilities in a highly lethal manner, this environment demands a flexible, adaptable, and versatile military force that is ready and capable of being forward-deployed and forward-engaged, building partnerships, and immediately responding to crises or contingencies. Responding to a wide range of crises in a timely manner will require regionally-focused headquarters and forces that are both forward-postured and immediately deployable with a minimum of strategic lift. Sea-based forces, in particular, will be invaluable for discreet engagement activities, rapid crisis response, and sustainable power projection.

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 10 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 10 of 12):

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Marine Corps

Addressing these challenges, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Marine Corps builds on our historic role as the Nation's crisis response force and provides "best value" in terms of capability, cost, and readiness relative to the operational requirements of our Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). The Marine Corps' force structure must provide a strategically mobile, *middleweight force* optimized for rapid crisis response and forward-presence. It must be light enough to leverage the flexibility and capacity of amphibious shipping, yet heavy enough to accomplish the mission. Larger than special operations forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we must be able to engage and respond quickly – often from the sea – with enough force to carry the day upon arrival.



The dual demands of sustained forward presence and sufficient lift for the assault echelons of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) result in a requirement for 38 amphibious ships. Given fiscal constraints, however, the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to accept risk with 33 ships, increasing the imperative to design a lean and effective force structure. We will also explore options for employing Marines from a wider variety of Navy ships, seeking innovative naval solutions to GCC requirements.

Furthermore, our force structure must be able to exploit the carrying capacity of maritime prepositioning ships and the speed of strategic airlift. As necessary, we must be able to aggregate Marine Corps capabilities, often provided by our reserve component, as well as integrate with capabilities provided by Joint Force, Coalition or interagency partners for sustained operations ashore. The ability of Marines to rapidly aggregate from widely dispersed locations to form cohesive Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) is the foundation of our organization. MAGTFs enable coordinated action throughout the range of military operations.

Re-Shaping Marine Corps Capabilities and Capacities

The imperative for the Marine Corps is to preserve capabilities developed since 9/11, expand our engagement efforts, respond to crisis, and still be able to project power for the most dangerous threat scenarios. To that end we will accept a degree of risk by reducing our active component capacity for conducting multiple, major sustained operations ashore, relying on an

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 11 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 11 of 12):

- maintaining the capacity and capabilities to conduct amphibious operations across the range of military operations;
- increasing the depth, availability and responsiveness of our combat service support capabilities by reorganizing Marine logistics groups to establish standing combat logistics battalions habitually aligned to specific Marine expeditionary units and infantry regiments;
- capitalizing on the ISR, C2 and future strike capabilities of unmanned aircraft systems via a 25% increase in capacity;
- reorganizing our intelligence collection and exploitation capabilities to enhance readiness by directly linking deployed forces, garrison support and the intelligence community;
- increasing capacity for cyber network defense, exploitation and attack operations by augmenting our communication and radio battalions, and by increasing the structure of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command;
- enhancing capabilities to conduct and manage battlefield biometric, forensic, and law enforcement operations by creating a law enforcement support battalion within each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF);
- retaining and better integrating the training, advising, and assistance organizations designed to enable and enhance irregular warfare capabilities, partner-nation engagement, and cultural understanding;
- strengthening the capabilities of Marine Special Operations Command through a 44% increase in critical combat support and combat service support Marines;
- increasing support to U.S. Army and partner-nation forces by adding another air and naval gunfire liaison company; and
- reducing overhead in the supporting establishment where parallel or duplicative functions could be efficiently combined or eliminated, including conversion of certain military billets to civilian positions while achieving an overall reduction in civilian personnel.

Risk Mitigation

Reshaping the Marine Corps from a wartime footing of 202,000 Marines to a force of approximately 186,800 imposes some risk. All proposed force structure changes were wargamed against approved Department of Defense scenarios and selected operation plans. The resulting force will be capable of operating across the range of military operations but will assume some risk in the capacity to conduct simultaneous major combat operations and campaigns. This risk is created by combining a MARFOR with a MEF headquarters, preserving the core warfighting

Comment ID: N-18720 (Page 12 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18720 (Page 12 of 12):

Major Initiatives	
<p><b>Optimize Forces</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced infantry battalions (77 to 24)</li> <li>• Reduced artillery battalions (11 to 9)</li> <li>• Reduced flying squadrons (70 to 61)</li> <li>• Reduced wing support group HQs (3 to 0)</li> <li>• Increased unmanned aircraft system squadrons (4 to 5)</li> <li>• Reorganized Marine logistics groups</li> <li>• Consolidated military police to support law enforcement requirements</li> <li>• Built five joint task force capable MEB HQs for GCCs</li> <li>• Increased regional component capacity</li> <li>• Preserved 60% of the irregular warfare enablers from the 2022 force</li> <li>• Increased Cyber structure &gt;250</li> <li>• Increased Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command by &gt;1000</li> </ul>	<p><b>Reserve Component</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cadet division, wing, logistics group, and Mobilization Command headquarters</li> <li>• Increased civil affairs groups (3 to 5)</li> <li>• Doubled counter-intelligence/human intelligence</li> <li>• Increased air and naval gunfire liaison companies (2 to 3)</li> </ul> <p><b>Supporting Establishment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reorganized installations commands</li> <li>• Training Command HQ consolidated into Training and Education Command HQ</li> <li>• No changes to HMX-1, nuclear weapon security, joint billets, Chemical-Biological Incident Response Force, or State Department support</li> <li>• Reduced civilian structure &gt;2900</li> </ul>

Conclusion

Our number one priority remains operations in Afghanistan. Some force structure changes do not impact those operations and are already underway, especially with respect to the command, aviation, and logistics combat elements and the reserve component. Many of these adjustments will actually enhance our capabilities in Afghanistan. We will conduct more detailed planning with respect to implementing further changes, many of which will be conditions-based. This will include wargaming, experimentation, allied, inter-Service, and inter-agency collaboration designed to test the force structure, improve interoperability and increase responsiveness to the GCCs.

We believe the aggregate utility of our proposed force structure will meet Title 10 responsibilities, broaden capabilities, enhance speed and response options, and foster the partnerships necessary to execute the range of military operations, while providing “best value” to the Nation.

Comment ID: N-18721

Comment ID: N-18721  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps  
Mining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: LANDERS CA DATE: 5-24-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

6 Reasons to Expand to the East

1. There is empty space to the east with limited impact to the public.
2. By leaving the Johnson Valley area as it, you are providing a public benefit. Off hi-way vehicle enthusiasts have a place to play and train. Some of these young people are future servicemen and women; this opportunity develops skills and dedication.
3. This off hi-way playground supports local businesses and contributes to the economy as people come here from all over the world.
4. Using this space for military maneuvers will distress local residents with increased noise and vibrations.
5. Use will forever change the fragile eco-system.
6. Environmental issues to be addressed include protected species: kangaroo rats, desert turtles, Joshua trees and creosote bushes.

1. NAME: MR + MRS. BRYAN LINDGREN

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: P.O. BOX 3469  
LANDERS CA 92285

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail to: May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18721 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18722

Comment ID: N-18722  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

**Corps**  
**ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**al Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 38043 Cuatro Lucerne Valley (DATE: 5-23-11)

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

I AM A 72yr OLD WIDOW. MY NET FINANCIAL WORTH IS WHAT I HAVE INVESTED IN MY PROPERTY. BECAUSE OF THE ECONOMIC SITUATION MY PROPERTY IS UPSIDE DOWN IN VALUE. IF YOU DO WHAT YOU ARE PROPOSING TO DO IN LUCERNE VALLEY & JOHNSON VALLEY MY FINANCIAL WORTH BECOMES NOTHING. (IT WILL AFFECT THE PROPERTY VALUES) I NEVER TRUST MY OWN GOVERNMENT WOULD PUT ME IN THE POOR HOUSE. PLEASE CONSIDER GOING EAST WHERE YOU WILL DO LESS DAMAGE TO THE POPULATION YOU PROTECT.

I THANK YOU SINCERELY  
Penny Baillie

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\* Penny Baillie

1. NAME: Penny Baillie

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 38043 Cuatro Lucerne Valley, CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18722:

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18723

Comment ID: N-18723  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Corps  
ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
al Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 37942 FOOTHILL RD DATE: 5/23/11  
LUCERNE VALLEY

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

WE LIVE IN LUCERNE VALLEY ENJOY OUR PEACE AND QUIET, WE ARE AVIAD EQUINEBIANS AND LOVE OUR REGULAR CUTINGS AND TRAIL RIDES IN THE "GUTES" ON THE NORTH SIDE OF HWY 247. SUCH FACILITY AS YOU ARE PROPOSING WOULD RUIN OUR WAY OF LIFE. OUR ANIMALS ARE ALREADY BOTHERED BY YOUR LOW FLYING AIRCRAFTS NOT TO MENTION THE ADDITIONAL TREMORS WE GET FROM THE MINING COMPANIES ON THE SOUTH SIDE OF HWY 247. GO FURTHER NORTH/EAST IF YOU MUST, BUT DO NOT COME WEST OF 29 PALMS.

Thank You.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: DEANIE CAFFEY
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) N/A
3. ADDRESS: 37942 FOOTHILL RD  
LUCERNE VALLEY, CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18723:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18724 (Page 1 of 2)**

Comment ID: N-18724  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190

Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns regarding the proposed Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corp Base Expansion. I was informed at a recent public meeting held by base personnel at the Copper Mountain College facility that alternative no. 6 is the preferred alternative.

Alternative no. 6 includes shared boundaries with the remaining public land used for OHV recreation and many other activities. My concern is for the safety of the public.

At a meeting I attended early this year on base regarding fencing and or signage at these boundaries I was informed that knowing these boundaries is the responsibility of the public and that fencing was too expensive. However the signage would be upgraded at some locations.

I was told "Ignorance is no Excuse"! And I agree, however I feel that the military base has a responsibility to safeguard the public when extraordinary hazards and conditions exist especially when you intend to expand into existing public recreation area and remain contingent to this open public land.

It has been documented that civilians have been injured while trespassing on base both unknowingly and intentionally. They were able to trespass onto base property from any number of locations not marked or fenced.

The base recognized the trespass condition and has upgraded enforcement. Recently 36 private citizens were cited and appeared in court for the violation. No signs or fences were apparent at access locations.

In your DEIS 3.4-14 you state:

*In-place remediation incorporates the consideration of installing temporary fences or barriers to keep wildlife out of spill areas and other known contaminated areas that have not yet been remediated (MAGTF Training Command 2007a).*

I ask that the DEIS reflect the same consideration for the public as it does for the wildlife. An active live fire training/bombing range must be fence to prevent public access.

**Response to Comment N-18724 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18724 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18724 (Page 2 of 2):

On page es6 you indicate the following:

*Assist local governments and community members with posting of appropriate signage (for restricted use/limited use areas) at key points of entry, areas of concern, or areas that have experienced frequent illegal OHV use.*

*Permanent signage would be staggered across the boundary lines of acquired lands (for any RPAA or exclusive military use areas) at an acceptable interval to make it difficult for anyone to enter the area without having seen a sign. Signage would be maintained.*

This verbiage is unacceptable. You must specify what "appropriate signage" is and what "acceptable intervals" are for a motorcyclist or hikers to see a sign.

Please respond to these concerns at the following address and make appropriate changes to your EIS.

Sincerely,



Ray Pessa  
58725 Natoma Tr  
Yucca Valley, Ca. 92284  
(760-365-7449)

Member – Friends of Giant Rock  
Member – California Off Road Vehicle Assn

**Comment ID: N-18725 (Page 1 of 3)**

Comment ID: N-18725  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Ryan Dougherty  
60545 Natoma Trail  
Joshua Tree Ca 92252  
dord79.r@gmail.com 760-401-6276

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The DEIS states:

Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

3.11 Cultural Resources: The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:

Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.

It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
- Devaluation of surrounding private property.

• Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.

All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries.

**Response to Comment N-18725 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley. Furthermore, Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS has been updated as appropriate to address issues related to the Small Homestead Act.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

If one of the proposed alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Comment ID: N-18725 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18725 (Page 2 of 3):

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflown by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when the want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage.

"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of

Comment ID: N-18725 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18725 (Page 3 of 3):

spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision."  
—Desert Magazine 1944

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves. The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant.  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

Thank You



Ryan Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18726 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18726  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Ryan Dongberry  
60545 Natoma Trail  
Joshua Tree CA 92252  
Dord79@gmail.com 760-401-6276

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The Executive Summary on Page 4 explains why the USMC is proposing the establishment of a large-scale training facility at MCAGCC 29Palms. It says the Marine Corps has a requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Air Ground Task Force, and the existing facilities are inadequate.

The underlying strategy was designed over a decade ago. Times and technology have changed. It appears the very foundation for this strategy is changing.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/gates-time-has-come-to/>

Posted by SWJ Editors on August 13, 2010 4:01 AM

Gates Orders Marine Corps Force Structure Review by Jim Garamone of American Forces Press Service. An excerpt follows:

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered a thorough force structure review of the Marine Corps to determine what an expeditionary force in readiness should look like in the 21st century. There are questions about the mission of the Marine Corps, Gates said. Before World War II, the Marines very successfully conducted "small wars" in the western hemisphere. The service also developed the rationale and logistics needed to conduct amphibious warfare. During World War II, the Corps was wholly dedicated to landing on the beaches in the South and Central Pacific. America's first offensive of World War II was when Marines landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal and began the campaign against Japan in August 1942. Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are just a few of the landings Marines made. Since then, Marines have fought on the beaches, mountains and trenches of Korea, the highlands and rice paddies of Vietnam, and the deserts of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although many of these operations saw Marines initially projected from the sea, "they soon turned into long, grinding, ground engagements," Gates said.

The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time.

Also see Gates: Time Has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and Defense Chief Gates Orders Review of Marines' Role by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times.

A more recent article dated Mar. 2, 2011, says that Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, spoke to news media about the 2010 Force Structure Review (formed to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of the Marine Corps and its role within the joint force in a fiscally-restrained post-Afghanistan environment; and I quote):  
Two of the recommendations from the Review are:

Response to Comment N-18726 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18726 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18726 (Page 2 of 2):

A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,800 when conditions in Afghanistan warrant, and Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental headquarters from eight to seven; infantry battalions from 27-24); a reduction in cannon artillery battalions (nine to seven; but a reorganization of batteries to support distributed operations), and a reduction in armor (10 companies to 8).  
See more at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/Pages/RestoringbalanceinMarineCorps.aspx>

The Force Structure Review of 2010 itself is attached. Its objectives do not jibe with the objectives stated for the MCAGCC expansion.

The very foundation for this Draft Environmental Impact Study is outdated.  
Page 4 even says that the training requirement is drawn from an earlier Marine Strategy 21 for 2000.  
Page 77 Land Use Requirements Study was completed in July of 2005 and based on the earlier training requirements.

On Page 78 it is stated:

1. that MEB-size training is declared (in 2008) by the Marine Corps to be an enduring requirement
2. therefore existing land and air space is insufficient,
3. therefore land acquisition is necessary

Any study of military history shows the last thing any fighting force needs is an enduring requirement. Otherwise, we would still have muzzleloaders, horse-drawn caissons or Sherman tanks.  
Therefore the judgement that MEB-sized training is required is flawed.  
Therefore the judgement that existing land and air space is insufficient is called into question.  
Therefore the judgement that land acquisition is necessary is flawed.

Because the Marines state they must train as they fight, it does not mean they are not already doing so, or that they cannot make quick judgements based on today's conditions for training requirements for tomorrow. Because so much time has been put into this outdated plan does not mean it must roll downhill without taking another look.

The document must be reviewed and anywhere outdated requirements are defined for MEB-sized training, and the existing facilities are declared inadequate, they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere ideal range requirements are mentioned they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere airspace requirements are defined they must be justified to today's needs.

The statement on Page 192 that the No-Action Alternative would not meet the needs for the proposed action must be reconsidered in this light also.

Otherwise the entire document must be discarded as it is based on outdated decisions and information.

Thank you for your attention.

  
Ryan Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18727 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18727  
Date Received: May 27, 2011

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From:  
Ryan Dougherty  
60545 Natoma Trail  
Joshua Tree CA 92252  
jrd179@gmail.com 760-401-6276  
Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

The Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) is attached. It totals toxic releases during the years 2007-2009, the latest report available.

A "TRI release" is defined as the amount of on-site toxic chemical releases to air, water, underground injection, landfills and other land disposal, and the amount transferred off-site for disposal. The top ten facilities with the most chemical releases in California included Marine Camp Pendleton at #10.

PBT Chemical releases are releases of Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemicals. Merriam-Webster defines "persistent" as "existing for a long or longer than usual time or continuously."

It defines "bioaccumulation" as "the accumulation of a substance (such as a pesticide) in a living organism."

It defines "toxic" as "poisonous."

In other words, it means poisons that last a long time, and collect in the bodies of plants and animals and the animals that eat them.

Of the top 10 California release sites, numbers 6-10 were military, one Army and four Marine, all in Southern California. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms is #7, with a little under half the PBT chemical releases that were measured at Camp Pendleton.

Though the trend shown in the inventory is generally downward for the state, if live fire combat training increases in intensity and duration on the scale the DEIS describes, MCAGCC will obviously rise on the list.

Starting on Page 293, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement describes in detail the procedures used to comply with recording and reporting releases of TRI Chemicals. It addresses the Marines' methods for dealing with hazardous material spill abatement and cleanups, and contaminated soils.

"Munitions Constituents" (MC) from unexploded ordnance and other munitions, and their breakdown elements, are described and mapped for current and historical ranges. Potential migration into humans and animals is addressed with somewhat limited studies. Perchlorate is described as an indicator munitions constituent as it is a good example of PBT (see definitions above). Perchlorate recently came to public notice again as a constituent of the drinking water in Barstow, CA.

Databases on hazardous wastes from many sources and contaminated sites are described as not revealing any relevant sites. Formerly used defense sites are discussed. All are declared not relevant.

On Page 293, one paragraph describes a total of 50 accidental releases, in 2002, of toxic substances and what was done about them. Deliberate releases and munitions constituents are not itemized. The discussion of toxic wastes ends on Page 301 of the DEIS. Nowhere is the Environmental

Response to Comment N-18727 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. Munitions constituents and toxic chemical release reporting requirements are described in Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the EIS. As described in the EIS the Combat Center complies with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program, and all other federal, state, and local requirements regarding hazardous materials and wastes, and would continue to do so under the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18727 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18727 (Page 2 of 2):

Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory mentioned, with its specific amounts, and the relative standing of military sites in general and MCAGCC in particular.

Therefore the DEIS must be amended to show not only the methodology for reporting toxic contaminants but also the kinds and quantities. It must also clearly state estimates for any increases in toxic releases for each Alternative course of action. It must also state this information was missing in the draft document.

On Page 295 is a map of munitions constituents loading areas on the existing Base. Maps must be added to the DEIS to show where planned MC loading areas would be in each Alternative course of action.

On Page 796 it is stated that use of munitions under Alternative One would be similar to existing use, and therefore potential impacts from the use of munitions would be minimal. Since ordnance use is planned to be more intensive and of longer duration, the DEIS must be corrected to reflect that fact and state the draft document was in error. This must also be done for all the other Alternatives.

Thank you,



Ryan Dougherty

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 1 of 20)

Comment ID: N-18728  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

5/22/11  
13443 Coachella Rd  
Apple Valley, CA 92308

Dear EIS Project Leader:

These are my comments on the Draft EIS for the 29 Palms Base Expansion:

FIGURE 1-4: Put the fixed range numbers on this map so it will correlate with Table B-2 Appendix B.

PAGE 1-16: You say there are 25 fixed ranges. Table B-2 shows 29.

PAGE 2-85: You say "Alternatives 4 and 5 would have greater adverse impacts..." but a paragraph later you say "Alternative 5 is the environmentally preferred alternative." This is inconsistent. The environmentally preferred alternative should be the one with the less adverse impacts.

PAGE 2-99: How is "special conservation measures" different than "mitigation measures"?

PAGE 2-107: Provide the references for the two documents mentioned in section 2.8.7.

PAGE 3.1-2: The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (P.L. 94-579) (43 U.S.C. 1701-1771, and other U.S.C. sections; 90 Stat. 2743), approved October 21, 1976, constitutes an "Organic Act" for the Bureau of Land Management. Among other things, it establishes new procedures for creating, modifying and terminating withdrawals and reservations of public lands. "FLPMA" directs the BLM to manage public lands on the basis of multiple use, in a manner that "recognizes the Nation's need for domestic sources of minerals, food, timber, and fiber from the public lands." FLPMA requires the development and maintenance of land use plans based on an inventory of all public lands and their resources. Requires that public lands be retained unless it is determined that disposal will serve the national interest. FLPMA also places fish and wildlife management on an equal footing with other traditional land uses.

PAGE 3.1-2: Your project and EIS ignore the requirements of several Federal laws, as well as the impact your project will have on the intent of these laws. Other Federal "Regulatory Framework" that you must recognize and consider in the EIS (this section and also in chapter 7) includes:

- Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (Mineral Lands Leasing Act) 30 USC 181
- Mining Act of 1872 30 USC 26
- Administrative Procedures Act 5 USC 551
- Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 30 USC 21a
- Multiple Surface Use Act of 1955 60 Stat. 367

GEN-1  
GEN-2  
GEN-3  
GEN-4  
LU-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 1 of 20):

**GEN-1:**

Thanks for your comment. The discrepancy between the text on page 1-16 and the number of ranges listed in Table B-2 has been corrected.

**GEN-2:**

Section 2.8 describes the Preferred Alternative evaluation. As indicated in the EIS, Alternative 1 is the best alternative from an operational perspective, while Alternative 5 is the best alternative from an environmental perspective. Alternative 6 was determined to be the Preferred Alternative based on the training value afforded and the amount of land area that would still be available and accessible to the public for recreational purposes.

**GEN-3:**

Section 2.8 of the EIS has been updated to clarify the distinction between special conservations measures incorporated into the proposed action and potential mitigation measures that have been identified for certain resources under specific alternatives.

**GEN-4:**

A reference for the REVA study has been added to Section 2.8.7 as suggested. As indicated in the text, the IESS is currently being prepared, therefore, no reference is currently available.

**LU-1:**

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 2 of 20)

Freedom of Information Act of 1974 5 USC 552  
 Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 43 USC 315  
 Unlawful Enclosures or Occupancy Act of 1885 43 USC 1061  
 Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970 42 USC 4371  
 Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 5 USC App. 2  
 Privacy Act of 1974 5 USC 552a  
 Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 43 USC 1901  
 Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926 43 USC 869  
 National Trails Systems Act of 1968 16 USC 1241  
 Wilderness Act of 1964 16 USC 1131  
 Material Sales Act of 1947, as amended 30 USC 601  
 Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 30 USC 1001

LU-1

PAGE 3.1-4: The purpose of Executive Order 11644 of 1972 (Use of Off Road Vehicles on Public Lands) is to establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure the control of off road vehicles on public lands to protect resources, promote safety, and minimize conflicts. In Sec 6, it says that "The respective agency head shall, where authorized by law, prescribe appropriate penalties for violation of regulations adopted pursuant to the order and shall establish procedures for the enforcement of these regulations. To the extent permitted by law, he may enter into agreements with State or local government agencies for cooperative enforcement of laws and regulations relating to off road vehicle use." Your EIS must indicate how you plan to "control" ORVs, provide mitigation for them when displaced from Johnson Valley, enter into cooperative agreements, and establish procedures for enforcement of regulations.

REC-1

PAGE 3.1-4: Executive Order 11989 of 1977 (Off Road Vehicles (ORV)) directs heads of Federal agencies to close areas to ORV use whenever it is determined that use of ORVs is or will cause considerable adverse impact on soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat, or certain other resources on the public lands. Agencies are also authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands shall be closed to ORVs except for designated open areas and trails. Within your EIS, you must indicate whether adverse impacts are being caused by ORVs before you can propose additional closures of public lands to them.

REC-2

PAGE 3.1-5: Reference Appendix B. Provide a reference for Table 3.1-1. Also, this table is redundant with Table B-1 Appendix B.

LU-2

PAGE 3.1-11: Under "mining," you need to quantify the number of inactive mines, shafts and tunnels in the EIS. That information is needed now for public disclosure and good impact analysis. It cannot wait until the "real estate survey and appraisal process."

LU-3

FIGURES 3.1-4 and 3.2-3 are redundant. The first one doesn't even include Dumont Dunes, Spangler Hills, Dover Springs, Jawbone Canyon and Keysville. You also need to include all the ones to the south such as Imperial Dunes, Glamis and more.

LU-4

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 2 of 20):

**REC-1:**

The specific details on management of the RPAA have not been formalized at this time. Section 2.5 outlines the management procedures that have been developed at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA, a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

**REC-2:**

Section 4.2 analyzes impacts to recreation. An additional study of impacts to recreation and loss of recreational lands was completed and the EIS has been updated appropriately.

**LU-2:**

A reference has been added as suggested. Appendix B is stand-alone to the EIS, therefore, redundancy should be expected and no change has been made.

**LU-3:**

Comment noted. Only active and potentially active mines were quantified for the impact analysis. Other non-operating mines and mining facilities would be further identified after completion of this NEPA analysis, as part of the real estate survey and appraisal process, if one of the action alternatives were selected.

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 3 of 20)

PAGE 3.2-1. Pertaining to the regulatory framework for recreation, your project and the EIS for it ignore the requirements of several Federal laws, as well as the impact your project will have on the intent of these laws. Other Federal "Regulatory Framework" that you must recognize and consider in the EIS includes:

Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926	43 USC 869
National Trails Systems Act of 1968	16 USC 1241
Wilderness Act of 1964	16 USC 1131

The *Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926* (P.L. 69-386) (44 Stat. 741, 43 U.S.C. 869) allows the Secretary of the Interior to dispose of any public lands to a State, Territory, county, or municipality for any public purposes, or to a nonprofit corporation or association for any recreational or public purpose consistent with its articles of incorporation or other creating authority. Before the land may be disposed of, it must be shown that the land is to be used for an established or definitively proposed project. Authorizes the lease or sale of historic properties under certain conditions. (See 43 CFR Subpart 2741 and Manual Section 2740.) **You must indicate in the EIS if your project is or isn't in compliance with this Act. By closing public lands, I feel that your project would not be in compliance as you would preclude these recreation opportunities.**

The *National Trails System Act of 1968* (P.L. 90-543) (82 Stat. 919; 16 U.S.C. 1241-1249) institutes a national system of recreation and scenic trails. Designates the Appalachian Trail and the Pacific Crest Trail as the initial components of that system and prescribes the methods by which, and standards according to which, additional components may be added to the system. Additional trails should be established primarily near urban areas and secondarily within established, more remotely located scenic areas. Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture may designate National Recreation Trails. Designation of National Scenic Trails requires specific Acts of Congress. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as your proposed closure of public lands would preclude the development of national trails there.**

The *Wilderness Act of 1964* (P.L. 88-577) (78 Stat. 890; 16 U.S.C. 1131-1136) establishes a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of Federally owned areas designated by Congress as wilderness areas, and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character, and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness. Directs the Secretary of the Interior, within ten years, to review every roadless area of 5,000 or more acres and every roadless island (regardless of size) and to recommend the suitability of each for inclusion in the System. Provides criteria for determining suitability and contains provisions related to activities that can be undertaken in a designated area. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as you have not called for the repeal of wilderness areas east of the USMC base which do not meet the suitability criteria.**

TABLE 3.2-2. How many visitors go to each of these areas? How many more can each area accommodate? You need to list the current visitation and identify if each area can handle all the displaced use that will result if/when Johnson Valley is closed.

REC-2

REC-3

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 3 of 20):

LU-4:

Figure 3.1-4 shows the open BLM OHV areas in the immediate vicinity of the Proposed Acquisition Study Areas and is not intended to include all the regional OHV areas. Figure 3.2-3 shows a broader view of the regional OHV areas in relation to the Proposed Acquisition Study Areas. In addition, Appendix M includes additional data regarding regional OHV areas.

REC-2:

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

REC-3:

Based on public input and comments, a Displaced OHV Recreation Study (DORS) has been completed and added to the EIS. Please see Appendix M and Section 4.2 for more information.

SOC-1:

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

SOC-2:

The data presented is the most current data available from the US Census Bureau.

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PAGE 3.3-1: Other Federal "Regulatory Framework" that you must recognize and consider in the EIS includes:  
 Administrative Procedures Act 5 USC 551  
 Freedom of Information Act of 1974 5 USC 552  
 Energy Security Act of 1980 30 USC 1501

**Administrative Procedures Act**, as amended (P.L. 79-404) (5 U.S.C. 551-559, 701-706, 1305-1310, 3344, 4301, 5362, 7521; 60 Stat. 237) outlines the several forms of administrative proceedings (hearings, adjudication, etc.) and prescribes procedural and substantive limitations thereon. The Act also provides for judicial review of Federal agency decisionmaking actions. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as you have not provided hearings.**

**Freedom of Information Act of 1974** (P.L. 93-502) (5 U.S.C. 552; 88 Stat. 1561) requires all Federal agencies to make available to the public for inspection and copying administrative staff manuals and staff instructions, official published and unpublished policy statements, final orders deciding case adjudication and other documents. Special exemptions have been reserved for nine categories of privileged material, including but not limited to confidential matters relating to National defense or foreign policy, law enforcement records and trade or commercial secrets. The Act requires the party seeking the information to pay search and duplication costs. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as you have not made documents, statements, orders and instruction readily available to the public for inspection.**

**Energy Security Act of 1980** (30 U.S.C. 1501) promotes the development and use of alternative energy resources including oil shale, synthetic fuels, wind power, and geothermal resources. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as you are proposing to close public lands to clean energy development and use.**

TABLE 3.3-4: USMC is mentioned for Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley. Why not for Joshua Tree too? Put the number of employees with each major employer. Hero Catering is a major employer in Landers? The local mini market probably employs more people.

PAGE 3.4-2: You have not been complete and forthcoming in your application of the following "Regulatory Framework." You must recognize and consider these further in the EIS:  
 Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980 42 USC 9601  
 Emergency Preparedness and Community Right-to-Know Act of 1986 42 USC 11001  
 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act of 1976 42 USC 6901  
 Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality (1970)  
 Executive Order 11752, Prevention, Control, Abatement of Pollution at Federal Facilities (1973)  
 Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards (1978)

**Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act (CERCLA) (Superfund) of 1980** (P.L. 96-510) (42 U.S.C. 9601) establishes a process for identifying, investigating and cleanup of hazardous substances releases from uncontrolled or abandoned hazardous waste sites. Provides for funding and authority to respond to hazardous substance spills, and for remediation of waste sites. Covers releases, cleanups, liability, inventory,

SOC-1

SOC-2

PHS-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 4 of 20):

**PHS-1:**

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

**PHS-2:**

Appendix F identifies munitions proposed for use under the proposed action and the hazards that are associated, including any explosive hazards. As indicated in the notes, the Cadiz Lake Sonic Target #3 is located within the former southeast study area, see Figure 2-3.

**AQ-1:**

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Section 3.8.2.

**BIO-1:**

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

**BIO-2:**

Figures have been updated as appropriate to show the correct south study area boundary and show identified wildlife linkages.

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hazardous rank score, natural resources damages, public involvement, community relations planning, Federal facility compliance, and national contingency planning.

*Emergency Planning and Community Right-To-Know Act (EPCRA) of 1986* (42 U.S.C. 11001) helps bring about state and local preparedness to deal with emergency situations caused by the unplanned release of hazardous materials. It mandates emergency response and emergency planning authorities. It also requires facilities to report if they have "extremely hazardous substances" in above threshold quantities and to report spills above specific "reportable" quantities.

*Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976* (P.L. 94-580, 42 U.S.C. 6901 et seq.) gave EPA the responsibility of regulating solid waste, a subset which is hazardous waste. RCRA addresses various topics relating to solid waste management including: hazardous waste management, waste oil management, land disposal restrictions, and tracking medical wastes. The RCRA regulations seek to manage hazardous waste from "cradle to grave," or from the point of generation to ultimate disposal.

*Executive Order 11514 of 1970* (Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality) is in furtherance of NEPA (1969, P.L. No. 91190), whereas the Federal Government shall provide leadership in protecting and enhancing the quality of the nation's environment. Agencies will monitor, evaluate, and control on a continuing basis so as to protect and enhance the quality of the environment. Such activities shall include those directed to controlling pollution and enhancing the environment... Agencies shall develop programs and measures to protect and enhance environmental quality.

*Executive Order 11752 of 1973* (Prevention, Control and Abatement of Pollution at Federal Facilities) assures that design, construction, management, operation and maintenance of federal facilities apply with standards for prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution in cooperation with state and local governments.

*Executive Order 12088 of 1978* (Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards) makes each agency responsible for ensuring that all necessary actions are taken for the prevention, control and abatement of environmental pollution with respect to Federal facilities and activities.

PAGE 3.4-10 and 11: You say that Appendix F identifies if each munition is dud-producing. That information is not shown in Appendix F.

TABLE 3.4-7: Why is that site listed? The title of the table is FUDS within the East Study Area. The first entry is not within the East Study Area, and it's not within any area still being studied for expansion.

PAGE 3.8-2: You have not been complete and forthcoming in your application of the Clean Air Act of 1955 (42 U.S.C. 7401, 69 Stat. 322, P.L. 89-272, P.L. 89-675, 42 U.S.C. 1857, P.L. 91-

PHS-1

PHS-2

AQ-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 5 of 20):

**CR-1, GEO-1, and WAT-1:**

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

**WAT-2:**

As indicated by the legend, Figure 3.13-1 shows watersheds and playa lake beds, hence the multiple names seen on the figure.

**GEN-5 and AIR-2:**

The evaluation criteria used for analyzing impact is discussed at the beginning of each resource section in Chapter 4.

**GEN-6:**

Consideration of cost of the project are outside the scope of this EIS analysis, although it is one of the several factors decision makers consider when selecting an alternative. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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604, P.L. 101-549). It provides national ambient air quality standards for sulfur dioxide, particulate matter less than ten microns, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, photochemical oxidants (ozone), and lead. The CAA also established national emission standards for 189 hazardous air pollutants (per revised CAA, 1990). Further, the CAA requires air discharge permits.

AQ-1

PAGE 3.10-2: You must acknowledge that the *Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended* (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq., 87 Stat. 884, P.L. 93 205, P.L. 94 359, 90 Stat. 913 (1974), P.L. 95 212, 91 Stat. 1493 (1977), P.L. 95 632, 92 Stat. 3751 (1978), P.L. 96 159 (1979), P.L. 97 304 (1982), P.L. 100-653 (1988)) provides a means whereby ecosystems upon which endangered species and threatened species depend may be conserved, to provide a program for the conservation of such endangered species and threatened species, and to take such steps as may be appropriate to achieve the purposes of the (relevant) treaties and conventions. The ESA requires all Federal departments and agencies to utilize their authorities to conserve species, subspecies, or populations of plants and animals officially listed by the Secretary of the Interior or Secretary of Commerce as threatened or endangered. All Federal departments and agencies shall seek to conserve endangered species and threatened species and shall utilize their authorities in furtherance of the purposes of the Act. The ESA requires Federal agencies to ensure that the continued existence of listed species is not jeopardized and that designated critical habitat of listed species is not destroyed or adversely modified. Requires consultation on agency actions to ensure that listed species are not jeopardized.

BIO-1

The ESA requires consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) or National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) if it is determined that any Federal action (e.g., a militaryland withdrawal) may affect a federally listed species or its critical habitat. The ESA requires conference with FWS if it is determined that an action may affect a proposed threatened and endangered (T&E) species. **The EIS must present the results of this consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.** The ESA says that the appropriate Secretary shall utilize the land acquisition and other authority under the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956 to acquire by purchase, donation, or otherwise land necessary to conserve wildlife including those listed as T&E. **To conserve tortoises and other species, the EIS must present your plan for mitigation (land acquisition elsewhere).**

Funds from the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 as amended may be used to acquire lands. The ESA says that the Secretary is authorized to enter into a cooperative agreement with states for the conservation of T&E species. Both listed and proposed species are protected under Section 7 of the ESA. Candidate species are not protected but are species that the service is considering for inclusion on the list.

PAGE 3.10-3: You must acknowledge that the *Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended* (16 U.S.C. 703-711; 40 Stat. 755) implemented the 1916 Convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the Protection of Migratory Birds (39 Stat. 1702) thereby

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 6 of 20):

**AIR-1:**

As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace for the preferred alternative. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted and if the preferred alternative is changed. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**AIR-2:**

Table 4.7-11 provides a summary of impacts for each alternative. For a more in-depth explanation of impact conclusion please see the discussion within Section 4.7.

**GEN-7:**

Thank you for your comment.

**NOI-1:**

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts. An overview of assumptions used for the noise analysis is presented in Section 4.9.1.1 with a more detailed discussion contained in Appendix H with the noise modeling.

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establishing a Federal responsibility for protection of the international migratory bird resource. Amendments of June 20, 1936 (49 Stat. 1556), implemented the 1936 Convention between the United States of America and the United Mexican States for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Game Mammals (50 Stat. 1311), as amended, and June 1, 1975, Public Law 93-300 (88 Stat. 190), among other things, implemented the 1973 Convention between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Japan for the Protection of Migratory Birds and Birds in Danger of Extinction, and their Environment (25 U.S.T. 3329; T.I.A.S. 7990), as amended. As amended by Public Law 86-732, September 8, 1960 (74 Stat. 866), the Act provides for regulations to control taking, selling, transporting and importing migratory birds, their nests, eggs, parts or products, when such items are included in the terms of any treaty, and provides enforcement authority and penalties for violations.

PAGE 3.10-4: In addition, the *Bald Eagle Act of 1940, as amended* (16 U.S.C. 668-668d; 54 Stat 250), as amended June 25, 1959, by Public Law 86-70 (73 Stat. 143), October 23, 1972, by Public Law 92-535 (86 Stat. 1064) provides for protection of the bald eagle (the national emblem) and the golden eagle by prohibiting except under certain specified conditions the taking, possession and commerce in such birds. The 1972 amendments increased penalties for violating provisions of the Act or regulations issued pursuant thereto and strengthened other enforcement measures.

SECTION 3.10-2: You must also acknowledge the importance of the following regulatory framework:  
 Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 16 USC 661  
 Sikes Act of 1960 16 USC 670a  
 Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 16 USC 715

*Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934, as amended in 1946, 1958 and 1965 (16 U.S.C. 661 667e.* (1958), 48 Stat. 401, 60 Stat. 1080, 72 Stat. 563, 79 Stat. 216, 82 Stat. 563) authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to assist Federal, State and other agencies in the development, protection, rearing and stocking fish and wildlife on Federal lands, and to study the effects of pollution of fish and wildlife. Provides for donating land and funds in furthering purposes of the Act and for appropriation of funds. Requires action agency to consult with the FWS and the State species managing agency to develop mitigation or compliance for proposed land-use authorizations wherein waters of any stream or other water body are proposed to be impounded, diverted, channelized or otherwise controlled or modified. Authorizes Federal water resource agencies to acquire lands or interests in connection with water use projects specifically for mitigation and enhancement of fish and wildlife. **Your project is not in compliance with this Act as you have not proposed adequate mitigation for wildlife impacts.**

*Sikes Act of 1960, as amended* (P.L. 86-797) (16 U.S.C. 670a-f; 74 Stat 1052, P.L. 93-452, 88 Stat 1369 (1974), P.L. 95-420, and 92 Stat 921 (1978)) – Title II extended Sikes Act authority for wildlife program development from strictly military reservations to public lands administered by the U.S. Forest Service and BLM. **YOU and the BLM must:** "...plan, develop, maintain and coordinate programs for the conservation and rehabilitation of wildlife, fish and game." a) Title I

BIO-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 7 of 20):

GEN-8:

A summary of public scoping issues is contained at the beginning of each resource section in Chapter 4 of the EIS, titled “Public Scoping Issues”. The section does not list specific comments, rather summarizes the comments provided as key issues and themes.

GEN-9:

Mitigation measures were developed if feasible for resource area alternatives for which significant impacts were expected. As noted in the EIS, less than significant noise impacts are expected or no mitigation measures were determined to be feasible (in addition to the Special Conservation Measures outlined in Section 2.8).

LU-5:

Table 4.1-1 of the EIS provides summary of impacts to land use under all alternatives.

REC-4:

Section 3.2 of the EIS identifies areas that are open for legal OHV riding. This information is utilized in the analysis in Section 4.2. Table 4.2-6 provides summary of impacts to recreation under all alternatives. Recreation SCMs 1-3 would apply to all alternatives. Mitigation Measure REC-1 would apply only to alternatives 4, 5, and 6 as discussed in Section 4.2 of the EIS.

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extends wildlife programs on military reservations and provides funding authorization by Title II authorizes key elements for wildlife program management, such as cooperative agreements, close working relationships with State wildlife agencies, wildlife agency habitat management plans (HMPs), integration of wildlife program with planning and environmental assessment, on the ground wildlife habitat improvement, maintenance, and protection; management of both Federal and State listed threatened and endangered species; and establishment of a potential hunting and fishing stamp program for State wildlife agencies to use if and when they deem fit. The mandates of Title II, Section 202(c)(3), of the amended Sikes Act apply to both federally and State listed fish and wildlife, i.e., all listed animals. Programs planned, developed, maintained, or coordinated under the Sikes Act for the protection and development of wildlife resources must include provisions for the conservation of federally listed animals and the critical habitats on which they depend. Conservation of such animals and habitats should be a key criterion for mutual USMC/State justification of Sikes Act programs. **The EIS must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

**Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929, as amended** (16 U.S.C. 715-715d, 715e, 715f-715k, 715n-715r; 45 Stat. 1222) establishes a Migratory Bird Conservation Commission to approved areas recommended by the Secretary of the Interior for acquisition with Migratory Bird Conservation funds. Commission consists of the Secretary of the Interior as chairman, the Secretaries of Transportation and Agriculture, two members of the Senate and two of the House of Representatives, and a member ex officio from each State in which acquisition is being considered. The Commission through its chairman is directed to report by the first Monday in December of each year to Congress on its activities. The Secretary of the Interior is authorized to cooperate with local authorities in wildlife conservation, as well as conduct investigations, publish documents related to North American Birds, and to maintain and develop refuges. Provides for cooperation with States in enforcement. Procedures are established for acquisition by purchase, rental or gift of areas approved by the commission as sanctuaries for migratory birds, and an amendment February 17, 1976, Public Law 94-215 (90 Stat. 190), clarified that authority as applying to the purchase or rental of a partial interest. **The EIS must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

FIGURE 3-10-5: The South Study Area boundary is incorrect.

PAGE 3.10-38: You should show these wildlife linkages on a map. You have also not analyzed the impacts on these wildlife linkages in Chapter 4.

FIGURE 3.10-9: South Study Area boundary is incorrect. It was changed to eliminate a bunch of acres.

FIGURE 3.10-10: South Study Area boundary is incorrect. It was changed to eliminate a bunch of acres.

FIGURE 3.10-11: South Study Area boundary is incorrect. It was changed to eliminate a bunch of acres.

BIO-1

BIO-2

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 8 of 20):

**WAT-3:**

The EIS has been revised to update the project description for the Cadiz Conservation and Storage Project using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc and others.

**SOC-3:**

Table 4.3-16 of the EIS provides summary of impacts to socioeconomics under all alternatives. As indicated in the table, there would be less than significant or no impact to socioeconomics from implementation of the proposed action alternatives.

**PHS-3:**

Analysis of impacts from the presence of the high-pressure natural gas pipeline is contained in Section 4.4 (*Public Health and Safety*) due to the safety hazard if heavy military vehicles continually cross at the same points or if maneuver activities compromise the integrity of underground pipelines, resulting in potential impacts if an underground pipeline ruptures.

Beneficial impacts are identified for resource area action alternatives were only noted when they exist.

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PAGE 3.11-1: In reference to the *National Historic Preservation Act of 1966* (P.L. 89-665) (80 Stat. 915; 16 U.S.C. 470) as amended, you must acknowledge that the law declares a national policy of historic preservation (defined in the Act as "the protection, rehabilitation, restoration, and reconstruction of districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects significant in American history, architecture, archeology, or culture"), including the encouragement of preservation on the state and private levels; directs the expansion of the National Register of Historic Places to include cultural resources of state and local as well as national significance; authorizes matching Federal grants to states and the National Trust for Historic Preservation for acquisition and rehabilitation of National Register properties; established an Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. **The EIS must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

PAGE 3.11-1: Rather than just listing them, you must acknowledge the specific importance of the following regulatory framework:  
Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (1971)  
American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 42 USC 1996  
Antiquities Act of 1906 16 USC 431  
Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 16 USC 469  
Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 16 USC 470aa  
Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act of 1935 16 USC 461

*Executive Order 11593 of 1971 (Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment)* says that the federal government will provide leadership in preserving, restoring and maintaining the historic and cultural environment of the Nation. Agencies will practice stewardship and trusteeship, initiate measure to preserve, restore and maintain such resources, and, in consultation with the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation, institute procedures to ensure that plans and programs are contribute to the preservation/enhancement of non-federal sites, structures and objects of historic, archaeological or architectural importance. This Order (36 F.R. 8921, May 13, 1971) directs Federal Agencies to inventory cultural properties under their jurisdiction, to nominate to the National Register of Historic Places all federally owned properties that meet the criteria, to use due caution until the inventory and nomination processes are completed, and also to assure that Federal plans and programs contribute to preservation and enhancement of nonfederally owned properties. Some of the provisions of the Executive Order were incorporated in Section 110 of the National Historic Preservation Act by amendment. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

*American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978* (P.L. 95-431) (42 U.S.C. 1996, 92 Stat. 469) establishes U.S. policy to protect and preserve for the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut and Native Hawaiian, the right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions, including access to religious sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and freedom to worship through ceremonies and traditional rites. Such rights and freedoms cannot be disrupted by Federal agency practices. The act, a specific expression of First Amendment religious freedom guarantees, is not implemented by regulations. A court ruling determined there is a compliance element in the Act, requiring that a) the views of Indian leaders be obtained and considered when a proposed land use might conflict with traditional religious beliefs and practices, and that b) unnecessary interference with Indian religious practices be avoided during project implementation, but specifying that c) conflict need not necessarily bar Federal agencies from

CR-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 9 of 20):

**TRAN-1:**

Table 4.6-2 of the EIS has been updated to refer to mitigation measure TRAN-1. As noted in Section 4.6.4.3 of the EIS although impacts would be lessened with implementation of mitigation measure TRAN-1, it is expected that impacts to transportation and circulation would still be significant since there are no other paved roads in the vicinity of North Amboy Road.

**AIR-3:**

Table 4.7-7 of the EIS has been updated to clarify impacts.

**BIO-3:**

Text in Section 4.10 has been modified to clarify the lack or presence of wildlife linkages. Level of impact to biological resources depends on the species and alternative. Please see table 4.10-14 for a listing by alternative of significant impacts (SI), significant impact mitigable to less than significant (SI-M), and less than significant impact (LSI). Table 4.10-14 of the EIS has been updated to refer to mitigation measures for biological resources.

**CR-2:**

Table 4.11-1 identifies archaeological sites by alternatives. Potential mitigation measures for cultural resources are described in Section 4.11.2.4 of the EIS.

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adopting proposed land uses in the public interest (Wilson v. Block, 708 F.2d 735, 747). The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.

*Antiquities Act of 1906* (16 U.S.C. 431 et seq., 34 Stat. 225) provides for the protection of historic or prehistoric remains, or any object of antiquity, on Federal lands; establishes criminal sanctions for unauthorized destruction or appropriation of antiquities; and authorizes scientific investigation of antiquities on Federal lands, subject to permit and regulations. Permits must be obtained for examination of ruins, excavation of archaeological sites and the gathering of objects of antiquity. The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.

*Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended* (16 U.S.C. 469-469c; 74 Stat. 220) directs Federal agencies to notify the Secretary of the Interior whenever they find a Federal or Federally assisted, licensed or permitted project may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, prehistoric, historic or archaeological data. Funds may be appropriated, donated and/or transferred for the recovery, protection and preservation of such data. Amended the Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960 (see separate entry). The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.

*Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, as amended* (P.L. 96-95, 16 U.S.C. 470, 93 Stat. 721, P.L. 100-555, P.L. 100-588) provides felony-level penalties, more severe than those of the Antiquities Act, for the unauthorized excavation, removal, damage, alteration, or defacement of any archeological resource, more than 100 years of age, found on public lands or Indian lands. The act also prohibits the sale, purchase, exchange, transportation, receipt, or offering of any archeological resource obtained from public lands or Indian lands in violation of any Federal law. No distinction is made regarding National Register eligibility. The act establishes definitions, permit requirements, and criminal and civil penalties, among other provisions, to correct legal gaps and deficiencies in the Antiquities Act, which this act partially overlaps and supersedes. It is implemented by uniform regulations and departmental regulations, both at 43 CFR Part 7. The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.

*Historic Sites, Buildings and Antiquities Act of 1935, as amended* (P.L. 74-292) (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461-467) also popularly known as simply the Historic Sites Act, as amended by Public Law 89-249, October 9, 1965 (70 Stat. 971), declares it a national policy to preserve historic sites and objects of national significance. Provides procedures for designation administration and protection of sites, and establishes an Advisory Board. This act authorizes the programs that are known as the Historic American Buildings Survey, the Historic American Engineering Record, and the National Survey of Historic Sites and Buildings; authorizes the establishment of National Historic Sites and otherwise authorizes the preservation of properties "of national significance"; authorizes the designation of National Historic Landmarks; establishes criminal sanctions for violation of regulations pursuant to the act, authorizes interagency, intergovernmental, and interdisciplinary efforts for the preservation of cultural resources; and other provisions. The program is administered by the National Park Service. The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.

CR-1

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 10 of 20):

GEN-10:

Chapter 6 contains tables that contain a summary of environmental impacts under each action alternative, potential mitigation measures, and summary of cumulative impacts. The chapter is designed to be a summary; therefore, there will be tables that are duplicated from other areas of the document.

As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace for the preferred alternative. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted and if the preferred alternative is changed, therefore, mitigation measure AM-1 is applicable to all alternatives. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Table 6.3 should read "Summary of Cumulative Impacts". The EIS has been modified to reflect this change.

Appropriate regulatory framework has been identified in Chapter 3 for each resource area.

No glossary or index has been included with the EIS. A summary "How To Use This Document" is provided on the backside of the cover page and a table of contents occurs at the beginning of the EIS to provide a layout of document content. As required by NEPA, the EIS was written at a level that is understandable by the public and technical jargon is explained as needed within each resource section.

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Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 11 of 20):

PAGE 3.12-1: You must also acknowledge the importance of the following regulatory framework:

Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 16 USC 2001  
Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (Mineral Lands Leasing Act) 30 USC 181  
Mining Act of 1872 30 USC 26  
Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 30 USC 21a  
Material Sales Act of 1947, as amended 30 USC 601  
Multiple Surface Use Act of 1955 60 Stat. 367

*Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977* (P.L. 95-192) (16 U.S.C. 2001, 91 Stat. 1407) recognizes the importance of and need for obtaining and maintaining information of the current status of soil, water and related resources. Authorizes and directs a continuing appraisal of the Nation's soil, water and related resources. The appraisal includes: a) data on the quality and quantity of such resources, including fish and wildlife habitats; b) data on the capability and limitations of those resources for meeting current and projected demands on the resource base; c) data on the changes that have occurred in the status and condition of those resources resulting from various past uses; d) data on current federal and state laws, policies, programs, rights, regulations, ownerships and trends and considerations relating to use, development and conservation; e) data on the costs and benefits of alternative conservation practices; f) data on alternative irrigation techniques regarding costs, benefits, and impact on conservation, crop production and environmental factors. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

GEO-1

*Mineral Leasing Act of 1920, as amended* (41 Stat. 437; 30 U.S.C. 181, P.L. 93-153, 87 Stat. 576) a) States that deposits of coal, phosphate, sodium, oil, oil shale, or gas, and lands containing such deposits owned by the United States... shall be subject to disposition in the form and manner provided by this act. b) The Mineral Leasing Act and the following listed regulations and operating agreements provide for protection of all types of surface resources on lands subject to oil and gas leasing. c) 43 CFR 3045. Surface Management Requirements for Geophysical Exploration. d) 43 CFR 3109. Surface Management Requirements for Oil and Gas Leasing. e) NTL-6 Operating Procedures. Surface operating standards for oil and gas exploration and development. f) Lease Stipulations are necessary to protect specific surface resources prior to lease issuance. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act. Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as your proposed closure of public lands would preclude the development of mining there.**

*Mining Act of 1872* (30 U.S.C. 21, 17 Stat. 91) known as the General Mining Law, restates the mineral policy on the public domain as spelled out in the Acts of 1866 and 1870. The 1872 law declared that "valuable" mineral deposits rather than simply "mineral deposits" as stated in the Lode Mining Law of 1866 were to be "free and open to exploration and purchase." Addresses placer and lode claims. Placers are "all forms of deposit, excepting veins of quartz, or other rock in place." The cost of patenting a placer claim was set at \$2.50 an acre. Local mining customs were still recognized. Lode locations could be no more than 1,500 feet long and 600 feet wide. Individual claimants were limited to 20 acres, while associations or groups could have 160-acre claims. To protect claims from others, claimants had to perform \$100 of assessment work yearly

and show at least \$500 worth of improvements before the claims could be patented. Milling or processing sites could be entered on nonmineral land but could not exceed 5 acres. **Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as your proposed closure of public lands would preclude the development of mining there.**

*Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970* (P.L. 91 631, 84 Stat. 1876; 30 U.S.C. 21a) declares a continuing policy of the Federal government in the national interest to foster and encourage private enterprise in: a) The development of economically sound and stable domestic mining, minerals, metal, and mineral reclamation industries. b) The orderly and economic development of domestic mineral resources, reserves, and reclamation of metals and minerals to help assure satisfaction of industrial, security, and environmental needs. c) Mining, mineral, and metallurgical research, including the use and recycling of scrap to promote the wise use of our natural and reclaimable mineral resources. d) The study and development of methods for the disposal, control and reclamation of mined land, so as to lessen any adverse impact of mineral extraction and processing upon the physical environment that may result from mining or mineral activities. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act. Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as your proposed closure of public lands would preclude the development of mining there.**

GEO-1

*Multiple Surface Use Act of 1955* (P.L. 167) (60 Stat. 367) amends the 1872 Mining Law and Material Sales Act. It authorizes the Federal Government to manage and dispose of the surface vegetation resources and other resources on unpatented mining claims. Excluded from location under the mining laws are common varieties of mineral materials such as sand, stone, gravel, pumice, pumicite, cinders, etc. The above laws, plus subsequent regulations (3600), provide for disposal of common variety mineral materials. All deposits are subject to the NEPA process and adequate measures must be taken to protect, minimize, or correct damage to the environment. No mineral materials are to be sold if it is determined that the aggregate damage to the public lands and resources would exceed the benefits derived from the proposed sale. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act. Your project and EIS are not in compliance with this Act as your proposed closure of public lands would preclude the development of mining there.**

PAGE 3. 13-1: *Federal Water Pollution Control Act of 1948 (Clean Water Act)*, as amended (P.L. 92-500) (33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq., 86 Stat. 816, P.L. 95-217) was originally passed in 1948, and amendments of 1972 set up a Federal permit and license system to carry out certain pollution discharge activities in navigable waters. Section 402 requires permits from EPA for the discharge of any pollutant into navigable waters (Natl. Pollution Discharge Elimination System Permits). Section 404 provides for the Corps of Engineers to issue permits for the discharge of dredged or fill materials into the navigable waters with oversight by the EPA. Permit applications may be reviewed by USFWS for impacts on fish and wildlife. Activities associated with Marine Corps have the potential to impact surface water as a nonpoint source (NPS) of pollution. The objective of the Clean Water Act is "to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters" (Section 101(a)). Both point and nonpoint source pollution are addressed. The amended Act of 1987 (Water Quality Act of 1987) added to this section that "it is the national policy that programs for the control of nonpoint sources of pollution be developed and implemented in an expeditious manner so as to enable the goals of

WAT-1

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 13 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 13 of 20):

this Act to be met through the control of both point and nonpoint sources of pollution" (Section 101(a)(7)). The amendments to the Clean Water Act of 1987 also added Section 319 which identified the role of Best Management Practices in the control NPS. The Act requires the development of BMPs to control and reduce nonpoint source pollution "to the maximum extent practicable". The Nonpoint Source Task Force Report (1985) defined BMPs as "methods, measures, or practices to prevent or reduce water pollution, including, but not limited to, structural and nonstructural controls and operation and maintenance procedures". **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

Section 313 of the CWA and Executive Order 12088 requires Federal Agencies to comply with all State requirements and programs to control water pollution from nonpoint sources. Is the Dept of Navy or Marine Corps a "Designated Management Agency" charged with implementing and enforcing programs for the protection of water quality on federal lands under its jurisdiction through sound management practices or Best Management Practices? If so, you must state this in the EIS. BMPs "meet the substantive requirements of the State practices" and follow the State approved nonpoint source management strategy addressing water quality standards in compliance with the CWA. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

PAGE 3, 13-1: You fail to acknowledge the importance of these Laws and Executive Orders:  
Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 42 USC 300(f)  
Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 16 USC 2001  
Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management (1977)  
Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands (1977)

*Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974* (P.L. 93-523) (43 U.S.C. 300, 88 Stat. 1660) requires each federal agency with jurisdiction over any federally owned or maintained public water system to comply with all national primary drinking water regulations, and shall comply with any applicable underground injection control program, and shall keep such records and submit reports as required under such program. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

*Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977* (P.L. 95-192) (16 U.S.C. 2001, 91 Stat. 1407) recognizes the importance of and need for obtaining and maintaining information of the current status of soil, water and related resources. Authorizes and directs a continuing appraisal of the Nation's soil, water and related resources. The appraisal includes: a) data on the quality and quantity of such resources, including fish and wildlife habitats; b) data on the capability and limitations of those resources for meeting current and projected demands on the resource base; c) data on the changes that have occurred in the status and condition of those resources resulting from various past uses; d) data on current federal and state laws, policies, programs, rights, regulations, ownerships and trends and considerations relating to use, development and conservation; e) data on the costs and benefits of alternative conservation practices; f) data on alternative irrigation techniques regarding costs, benefits, and impact on conservation, crop production and environmental factors. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Act.**

WAT-1

*Executive Order 11988 of 1977 (Floodplain Management)* is an order to avoid, to the extent possible, long and short term adverse impacts associated with occupancy and modification of floodplains, and to avoid support of floodplain development wherever there is a practicable alternative. Each agency shall provide leadership and shall take action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare and to restore the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains. Calls for evaluating potential effects, considering alternatives, providing early public review, incorporating floodplain management into planning. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Order.**

WAT-1

*Executive Order 11990 of 1977 (Protection of Wetlands)* directs agencies to provide leadership and take action to minimize destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to enhance and preserve the natural and beneficial values of wetlands when a)acquiring, managing and disposing of lands and facilities, b)providing construction and improvements, and c)conducting land use activities and programs. **The EIS must mention and must be more forthcoming in how you plan to comply with this Order.**

FIGURE 3.13-1: Why is each dry lake labeled two or three times each? Emerson is labeled four times! What's the name of the "Dry Lake" near Amboj? Ericksen and Troy Lakes aren't even shown on the map. Shouldn't "Ericksen Dry Lake" actually be "Anderson Dry Lake"?

WAT-2

PAGE 4.1-1: Explain what you mean by significant impact (SI), less than significant (LSI), no impact (NI). Also SI-M and BI. Explain how special conservation measures and mitigation measures are different, if they are.

PAGE 4.1-1: You also introduce significant impact-mitigatable (SI-M) in the biology section. If a significant impact is mitigatable, are you saying the residual impact would be LSI? You identify mitigation in various other sections, but you never use the SI-M acronym there. What good is the mitigation if the significant impacts are not being mitigated?

GEN-5

PAGE 4.1-1: You only introduce BI (beneficial impacts) in the public health and safety section. I find it real hard to believe that you have not been able to identify any beneficial impacts in any other sections.

CHAPTER 4: You need to more clearly quantify the thresholds for determining significance for each impact identified. In nearly every case that you say an impact is "less than significant," you provide no quantified rationale to back that up. Your conclusions about significance are unsubstantiated. I will provide some specific examples when I come to them. One example is the impact on local economies.

PAGE 4.1-4: What's the cost of closing and reclaiming 325 active mines? Quantify the number of inactive mines to be closed. How many will need remediation? What will be the cost? American Mine alone will cost millions to close and reclaim. How can you conclude that incompatibility with mining are considered "less than significant" under alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6?

GEN-6

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 15 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 15 of 20):

PAGE 4.7-15: Under Alternative 1, you list a potential mitigation measure AM-1, but you say that the aeronautical study would only be completed by the FAA on the preferred alternative. Does this mitigation measure apply to alternative 1, the preferred alternative 6, or both, or all alternatives? It is unclear. Any why is the FAA only doing the study on the preferred alternative? They should be studying all the alternatives. It appears that the USMC and FAA have already made a decision and a secret agreement.

AIR-1

TABLE 4.7-11: If the impacts are “minimal to moderate,” then why are they “significant”? Identify which are minimal, and which are moderate? Identify which are LSI and which are SI.

AIR-2

PAGE 4.8-1: List the key data, assumptions and conclusions up front in section 4.8.1.1. It is unacceptable to just refer to Appendix G which has about 150 pages. You need a table of contents just for this lengthy, complex, technical appendix. There are sixty tables and a figure which have no explanations with each. Then you have an Appendix G.1 (LAS project conformity determinations), Attachment A (conformity evaluation), Attachment A-2 (PM10 dispersion modeling analyses), Appendix G.1.1 (Regulatory Review Status), Appendix G.2 (NO2 dispersion modeling analyses), Appendix G.3.1 (PM10 modeling for alternative 3), Appendix G.3.2 (NO2 modeling for alternative 3). It is unacceptable to have appendices within appendices. You are just trying to baffle the public with a bunch of bull.

AQ-2

PAGE 4.8-15: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.

GEN-7

PAGE 4.9-1: List the key noise data, assumptions and conclusions up front in section 4.9.1.1. It is unacceptable to just refer to Appendix H which has about 150 pages. You need a table of contents just for this lengthy, complex, technical appendix. There are no explanations for the four different sections within Appendix H. The general public is supposed to be able to read this and understand it. As is, it is meaningless. You are just trying to baffle the public with a bunch of bull.

NOI-1

PAGE 4.9-5: You only list one public scoping issue (noise from training and activities). List all the scoping issues that were identified, not just one example. I would like to make sure that you have properly analyzed all the issues that were identified.

GEN-8

PAGE 4.9-9: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. Look in your own scoping report. I’m sure many will be proposed during this public comment period on the Draft EIS too. After listing all measures considered, if you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.

GEN-9

TABLE 4.9-3: There will be significant localized noise impacts. It is wrong to say that noise will be “less than significant” under all alternatives.

NOI-1

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 16 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 16 of 20):

<p>PAGE 4.1-9: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. Identify the ones you “considered...but determined were not feasible.” You need to disclose to the public which ones were considered. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.</p>	<p>GEN-9</p>
<p>TABLE 4.1-1: Are these just the summary of land use impacts, or are they summary of all impacts?</p>	<p>LU-5</p>
<p>PAGE 4.2-2: List all the scoping issues that were identified, not just a sampling of six issues.</p>	<p>GEN-8</p>
<p>TABLE 4.2-1: I thought you could ride on roads and trails in the area east of the USMC base. You say that area isn’t open.</p>	
<p>TABLE 4.2-6: Are these just the summary of just recreation impacts, or are they summary of all impacts?</p>	<p>REC-4</p>
<p>TABLE 4.2-6: Would mitigation measure REC-1 apply to all alternatives? Why isn’t it mentioned? There are also many other mitigation measures that you haven’t even considered or analyzed.</p>	
<p>PAGE 4.2-8: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. Identify the ones you “considered...but determined were not feasible.” You need to disclose to the public which ones were considered. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.</p>	
<p>PAGE 4.2-16: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. Identify the ones you “considered...but determined were not feasible.” You need to disclose to the public which ones were considered. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why. Just because the USMC doesn’t want to implement them “unilaterally,” doesn’t mean they shouldn’t be listed and analyzed. Isn’t the BLM a cooperator with you? And isn’t the final decision made by Congress and the President? Identify the mitigation they can help with. To not even list them is a total cop-out.</p>	<p>GEN-9</p>
<p>PAGE 4.3-13: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. Identify the ones you “considered...but determined were not feasible.” You need to disclose to the public which ones were considered. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.</p>	
<p>PAGE 4.3-17: It is not true that “potential plans for transporting the water to the market area are not sufficiently defined.” In March 2011, the Santa Margarita Water District has announced notice of preparation of a draft Environmental Impact Report of what is now being styled as the “Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project.” Scoping meetings were held in March 2011. (see map attached)</p>	<p>WAT-3</p>

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 17 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 17 of 20):

PAGE 4.4-11: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. Some should be recommended for the other impacts, even if they are less than significant.	GEN-9
TABLE 4.3-16: Many of these impacts are significant.	SOC-3
PAGE 4.4-15: Why is this information about the natural gas pipelines in the "transportation" section?	PHS-3
PAGE 4.4-19: It's not realistic to think that parents would be able to supervise their children with "constant parental or guardian supervision at all times."	
TABLE 4.4-1: Why don't some of the other "summary of impacts" tables identify BIs (beneficial impacts) like this one does?	GEN-8
PAGE 4.5-6: List all the scoping issues that were identified, not just a sampling of two issues. I would like to make sure that you have properly analyzed all the issues that were identified.	
PAGE 4.5-11: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a lot of ideas. You must identify the ones you "considered..." You must explain why "none were feasible." By not providing this information, you are not being open and honest with the public. If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.	GEN-9
PAGE 4.6-2: It is not true that no transportation and circulation issues were raised by the public. I mentioned those concerns in my letter to you several years ago. List all the scoping issues that were identified.	GEN-8
PAGE 4.6-5: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. Identify the ones you "considered... but determined were not feasible." If you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.	GEN-9
PAGE 4.6-9: Why haven't you mentioned the mitigation measure TRAN-1 in this table? Would alternative 3 still have significant impacts? Also, I don't believe that a 2-day loss for access to Amboy Road is significant. You have skewed your analysis with a bias against alternative 3. If you agree that these impacts are really "less than significant," then this should be the preferred Marine Corps alternative – to expand to the east.	TRAN-1
PAGE 4.7-3: List all the scoping issues that were identified, not just one example (loss of a dirt runway). You should list all the airspace issues identified. I would like to make sure that you have properly analyzed all the issues that were identified.	GEN-8
TABLE 4.7-7: When you say there is "potential for impacts," are they "significant" or "less than significant"?	AIR-3

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 18 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 18 of 20):

PAGE 4.10-4: List all the wildlife issues that were identified by the public during scoping. I would like to make sure that you have properly analyzed all the issues that were identified.	GEN-8
PAGE 4.10-9: You say that “no existing wildlife corridors have been identified,” yet back on page 3.10-38 you say that modeling has identified some corridors and linkages.	BIO-3
PAGE 4.10-18: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. Look in your own scoping report. I’m sure many will be proposed during this public comment period on the Draft EIS too. After listing all measures considered, if you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.	GEN-9
TABLE 4.10-14: Are the other status species impacts “LSI” or “SI-M”? Either the Marines are going to avoid or protect these species or they are not.	BIO-3
TABLE 4.10-14: Why don’t you mention potential mitigation BIO-2 and BIO-3 for alternative 3? Are you biased against that alternative? With good mitigation, that should be the preferred alternative.	BIO-3
PAGE 4.11-2: It is not true that no cultural issues were raised by the public. I mentioned those concerns in my letter to you several years ago. So did many other people, including the Native American tribes. Look in your own scoping report for a few of the issues identified. List all the scoping issues that were identified.	GEN-8
TABLE 4.11-1: Why don’t you mention potential mitigation CUL-1?	CR-2
PAGE 4.12-1: List all the scoping issues that were identified, not just a sampling of three issues. The public would like to make sure you acknowledge all the issues, and I would like to make sure you properly analyzed all of them.	GEN-8
PAGE 4.12-9: You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. Look in your own scoping report. I’m sure many will be proposed during this public comment period on the Draft EIS too. You need to list the ones you considered here in the EIS. After listing all measures considered, if you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, you must explain why.	GEN-9
PAGE 4.13-8: Mitigation is for all impacts, significant or otherwise. You need to try a lot harder to find some potential feasible mitigation measures. The public has identified a bunch. Look in your own scoping report. I’m sure many will be proposed during this public comment period on the Draft EIS too. You need to list the ones you considered here in the EIS. After listing all measures considered, if you reject the public suggestions for mitigation, please explain why.	GEN-9
TABLE 5.5 and 6.3: Both tables appear to be the same. If there are no differences between the two, why do you need to include it twice?	GEN-10

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 19 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 19 of 20):

PAGE 6-15: You say that mitigation measure AM-1 would be applicable to alternative 1-6, but it is an FAA study only being done on the preferred alternative #6. Explain this inconsistency.

TABLE 6.3: The section is titled "Summary of Potential Mitigation Measures" but the table is titled "Summary of Cumulative Impacts." That is the same title as for Table 5.5. What are the differences between these two tables? I don't see any differences. Are both tables needed?

PAGE 7-1: This Table 7-1 does not include many of the laws, executive orders, and state & local plans & policies that were included earlier in the document in the various "Regulatory Framework" sections. In addition, there are some listed in this table that were not addressed earlier in the EIS. You have not even mentioned *FLPMA* or the *Engle Act* that pertain very directly to this project. You have also not analyzed or included in this Table 7-1 your compliance or non-compliance with the following laws and orders:

LAWS

- Administrative Procedures Act 5 USC 551
- American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 42 USC 1996
- Antiquities Act of 1906 16 USC 431
- Archeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974 16 USC 469
- Bald Eagle Protection Act of 1940 16 USC 668
- Energy Security Act of 1980 30 USC 1501
- Environmental Quality Improvement Act of 1970 42 USC 4371
- Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 5 USC App. 2
- Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act of 1934 16 USC 661
- Freedom of Information Act of 1974 5 USC 552
- Geothermal Steam Act of 1970 30 USC 1001
- Historic Sites, Buildings, and Antiquities Act of 1935 16 USC 461
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 16 USC 4601-4
- Material Sales Act of 1947, as amended 30 USC 601
- Migratory Bird Conservation Act of 1929 16 USC 715
- Mineral Leasing Act of 1920 (Mineral Lands Leasing Act) 30 USC 181
- Mining Act of 1872 30 USC 26
- Mining and Minerals Policy Act of 1970 30 USC 21a.
- Multiple Surface Use Act of 1955 60 Stat. 367
- National Trails Systems Act of 1968 16 USC 1241
- O&C Sustained Yield Act of 1937 43 USC 1181a
- Privacy Act of 1974 5 USC 552a
- Public Rangelands Improvement Act of 1978 43 USC 1901
- Recreation and Public Purposes Act of 1926 43 USC 869
- Reservoir Salvage Act of 1960 16 USC 580m-n
- Soil and Water Resources Conservation Act of 1977 16 USC 2001
- Taylor Grazing Act of 1934 43 USC 315
- Unlawful Enclosures or Occupancy Act of 1885 43 USC 1061
- Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 16 USC 1271
- Wild Free-Roaming Horses and Burros Act of 1971, as amended 16 USC 1331
- Wilderness Act of 1964 16 USC 1131

GEN-10

Comment ID: N-18728 (Page 20 of 20)

Response to Comment N-18728 (Page 20 of 20):

**EXECUTIVE ORDERS**

Executive Order 11514, Protection and Enhancement of Environmental Quality (1970)  
Executive Order 11593, Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment (1971)  
Executive Order 11644, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands (1972)  
Executive Order 11752, Prevention, Control, Abatement of Pollution at Federal Facilities (1973)  
Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management (1977)  
Executive Order 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands (1977)  
Executive Order 12088, Federal Compliance with Pollution Control Standards (1978)

GEN-10

**GLOSSARY:** You have not provided any glossary for this 1500+ page mega-document. That is needed for public understanding of a complex EIS.

**INDEX:** You have not provided any index for this 1500+ page mega-document. That is needed for public understanding of a complex EIS.

**APPENDICES:** You need to include References Cited into Appendices B, D and I.

**APPENDIX F:** It is not clear which items are dud-producing and which ones are non-dud producing.

Please add me to your mailing list for future notifications.

Sincerely,  
  
R. Sullivan

Comment ID: N-18729 (Page 1 of 10)

Comment ID: N-18729  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 20, 2011  
P.O. Box 879  
Newbury Park, CA 91319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Dear sir:

Subject: Comments on the Draft EIS for 29 Palms

**AIR QUALITY**

You have been remiss in not addressing all of the state and national ambient air quality standards that are applicable in California. Your EIS must be revised to fully analyze:

State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards Applicable in California Pollutant	Averaging Time	Standards in Parts Per Million by Volume	Standards in Parts Per Million by Volume	Standards in Micrograms Per Cubic Meter	Standards in Micrograms Per Cubic Meter	Violation Criteria California	Violation Criteria National
		California	National	California	National		
Ozone	1 Hour	0.09	Standard rescinded	180	Standard rescinded	If exceeded	Not applicable
Ozone	8 Hours	0.070	0.075	137	147	If exceeded	If exceeded by the mean of annual 4th highest daily values for a 3-year period
Carbon Monoxide	1 Hour	20	35	23,000	40,000	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Carbon Monoxide	8 Hours	9.0	9	10,000	10,000	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Carbon Monoxide	8 Hours (Lake Tahoe Basin only)	6.0	9	7,000	10,000	If equalled or exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual Average	0.050	0.053	57	100	If exceeded	If exceeded
Nitrogen Dioxide	1 Hour	0.18	0.100	339	188	If exceeded	If exceeded by the mean of annual 98th percentile values over 3 years
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual Average	No standard	0.030	No standard	80	Not applicable	If exceeded

AQ-1

Response to Comment N-18729 (Page 1 of 10):

**AQ-1:**

Thank you for your comment. Table 3.8-1 of the DEIS includes the National/California ambient air quality standards (N/CAAQS) that are most applicable to the evaluation of the project alternatives, although it inadvertently does not include the CAAQS for 24-hour SO2. Table 3.8-1 does not contain the State standards for sulfates, hydrogen sulfide, or vinyl chloride, as the project alternatives would emit only minor amounts or none of these pollutants. A full listing of the N/CAAQS is available at <http://www.arb.ca.gov/research/aaqs/aaqs2.pdf>.

Section 4.8.1.2 of the EIS defines annual emission thresholds that are used as indicators in the air quality analysis to determine if proposed emissions would contribute to a significant impact. In other words, these emission thresholds determine the potential for proposed emissions to contribute to an exceedance of the ambient air quality standards.

**AQ-2:**

Many of the dust control measures listed in the comment are not applicable to proposed construction or operations. Section 3.8.2.3 of the EIS identifies one of the main MDAQMD rules that would apply to project emissions – Rule 403 (Fugitive Dust). MDAQMD Rule 403.2 (Fugitive Dust Control for the Mojave Desert Planning Area [MDPA]), also would apply to proposed construction activities that occur in the project West and South Study Areas, but no other areas, as they would occur outside of the MDPA. Rule 403.2 would not apply to project operations, as they are not applicable source categories identified in the rule (Section 403.2(A)(2)).

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Sulfur Dioxide	24 Hours	0.04	0.14	103	355	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Sulfur Dioxide	3 Hours	No standard	0.5	No standard	1,300	Not applicable	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Sulfur Dioxide	1 Hour	0.25	No standard	635	No standard	If exceeded	Not applicable
Inhalable Particulate Matter (PM10)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	Not applicable	Not applicable	20	Standard rescinded	If exceeded	Not applicable
Inhalable Particulate Matter (PM10)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	50	150	If exceeded	For 1997 non-attainment areas, if exceeded on more than 1 day per year. For other areas, if exceeded by the mean of annual 99th percentile values over 3 years
Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	Not applicable	Not applicable	12	15.0	If exceeded	If exceeded as a 3-year spatial average of data from designated stations
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	35	Not applicable	If exceeded by the mean of annual 98th percentile values over 3 years
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	Calendar Quarter	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	1.5	Not applicable	If exceeded
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	Rolling 3-Month Average	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	0.15	Not applicable	If exceeded during a 3-year period
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	30 Days	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.5	No standard	If exceeded	Not applicable
Sulfate Particles (TSP sampler)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	25	No standard	If equalled or exceeded	Not applicable
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.05	No standard	42	No standard	If exceeded	Not applicable
Vinyl Chloride	24 Hours	0.01	No standard	26	No standard	If equalled or exceeded	Not applicable

Notes:

All standards except the national PM10 and PM2.5 standards are based on measurements corrected to 25 degrees C and 1 atmosphere pressure. The national PM10 and PM2.5 standards are based on direct flow volume data without correction to standard temperature and pressure. Decimal places shown for standard reflect the rounding or truncating conventions used for evaluating compliance.

AQ-1

Response to Comment N-18729 (Page 2 of 10):

AQ-2 Continued:

However, the project alternatives would cover the surfaces of new dirt roads constructed within these areas with gravel, which would minimize fugitive dust emissions from vehicles that operate on these roads. In addition, DEIS Section 4.8.2.1 identifies Special Conservation Measures (SCMs) for proposed construction activities that would exceed the applicable dust control requirements in Rule 403.2.

The DEIS performed a dispersion modeling analysis which determined that fugitive dust emissions from proposed operations would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, the analysis determined that Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the NAAQS for PM10. Therefore, except for Project Alternative 3, the project alternatives would comply with the purpose of MDAQMD Rule 403.2, which is to ensure that the NAAQS for PM10 will not be exceeded due to anthropogenic sources of fugitive dust within the MDPA (Section 403.2(A)(1)(a)).

In addition to the MDAQMD rules identified above, Section 3.8.2.1 of the DEIS states that MDAQMD Rule 2002 (General Federal Actions Conformity) would apply to proposed construction and operation. As discussed below, proposed activities also would comply with this rule. Therefore, the EIS evaluated all applicable MDAQMD rules and regulations that apply to proposed construction and operation.

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The "10" in PM10 and the "2.5" in PM2.5 are not particle size limits; these numbers identify the particle size class (aerodynamic diameter in microns) collected with 50% mass efficiency by certified sampling equipment. The maximum particle size collected by PM10 samplers is about 50 microns. The maximum particle size collected by PM2.5 samplers is about 6 microns. Data Sources: 40 CFR Part 50, 53, and 58; CARB (2010a); EPA (2010b).

In California, air quality regulation is a joint responsibility between CARB and local air quality management agencies. Local agencies are either a single county or a multi-county agency, typically called an Air Pollution Control District (APCD) or an Air Quality Management District (AQMD). APCDs and AQMDs have primary responsibility for most air quality regulatory programs, with CARB retaining oversight responsibilities. CARB directly implements statewide regulatory programs for motor vehicles, portable equipment, and hazardous air pollutants. The project area is under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD).

You must identify if the MDAQMD has adopted other regulations that affect facility construction and operation. Training activities would be subject to fugitive dust control requirements that prohibit creation of dust plumes that are visible beyond the property line of the emission source, and requires all "active operations" (construction/demolition activities, earthmoving activities, heavy or light duty vehicle movements, or creation of disturbed surface areas) to implement applicable best available control measures as defined by MDAQMD. You must summarize all best available dust control measures outlined in MDAQMD rules as general dust control measures. Enhanced dust control requirements would apply since the training is considered large operations. A large operation could be any active operations on property which contains 50 or more acres of disturbed surface area, or any earthmoving operation with a daily throughput volume of 5,000 cubic yards or more three or more times during the most recent 365-day period.

You have not fully addressed Clean Air Act conformity. Section 176(c) of the CAA requires federal agencies to ensure that actions undertaken in nonattainment or maintenance areas are consistent with the CAA and with federally enforceable air quality management plans. EPA has promulgated separate rules that establish conformity analysis procedures for highway/mass-transit projects (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A) and for other (general) federal agency actions (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B). General conformity requirements are potentially applicable to many federal agency actions, but apply only to those aspects of an action that involve on-going federal agency responsibility and control over direct or indirect sources of air pollutant emissions.

The EPA conformity rule establishes a process that is intended to demonstrate that the proposed federal action:

- Would not cause or contribute to new violations of federal air quality standards;
- Would not increase the frequency or severity of existing violations of federal air quality standards; and
- Would not delay the timely attainment of federal air quality standards.

The EPA general conformity rule applies to federal actions occurring in nonattainment or maintenance areas when the total direct and indirect emissions of nonattainment pollutants (or their precursors) exceed specified thresholds. The emission thresholds that trigger requirements of the conformity rule are called de minimis levels. Emissions associated with stationary sources that are subject to permit programs incorporated into the SIP are not counted against the de minimis threshold.

In the DEIS, compliance with the conformity rule can be demonstrated in several ways. Compliance is presumed if the net increase in direct and indirect emissions from a federal action would be less than the relevant de minimis level. If net emissions increases exceed the relevant de minimis value, a formal conformity determination process must be followed. Federal agency actions subject to the general conformity rule cannot proceed until there is a demonstration of consistency with the SIP. **Your DEIS is currently inadequate in this regard.**

**NOISE**

**Your EIS has not adequately addressed:**

- Noise Descriptors
- Decibel Scales
- Decibel Values
- Applicability with Plans, Policies and Regulations
- Federal Criteria and Standards
- State Criteria and Standards
- Local Criteria and Standards (specifically San Bernardino County)
- Vibration

AQ-1

AQ-2

AQ-3

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18729 (Page 3 of 10):

AQ-3

Regarding the adequacy of the project conformity evaluations, please see the responses to DEIS comments N-18713, AQ-3 and 2247, AQ-1. Appendix G.1.1 of the DEIS includes a letter from the MDAQMD stating their concurrence that the proposed action would comply with the requirements of MDAQMD Rule 2002, i.e., that the proposed action would conform to the State Implementation Plan (SIP).

**NOI-1:**

Appendix H has four sections – H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling. Only Section H-4 is the noise primer. Noise exposure from existing/current conditions are provided in Section 3.9. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives in Section 4.9. As noted in Section 4.1.2.7, *Sensitive Land Uses*, there are no sensitive receptors located within the areas where 62 dBC CNEL countour extends outside of the proposed boundaries. As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts. Impacts from noise and vibration would be less than significant, therefore, no mitigation measures have been proposed.

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Noise is defined as unwanted or extraneous sound. Sound is caused by vibrations that generate waves of minute air pressure fluctuations. Air pressure fluctuations that occur from 20 to 20,000 times per second can be detected as audible sound. The number of pressure fluctuations per second is normally reported as cycles per second or Hertz (Hz). Different vibration frequencies produce different tonal qualities for the resulting sound. In general, sound waves travel away from the noise source as an expanding spherical surface. The energy contained in a sound wave is consequently spread over an increasing area as it travels away from the source. This results in a decrease in loudness at greater distances from the noise source.

**Decibel Scales**

Human hearing varies in sensitivity for different sound frequencies. The ear is most sensitive to sound frequencies between 800 and 8,000 Hz, less sensitive to higher and lower sound frequencies, and least sensitive to sound frequencies below 250 Hz. Peak sensitivity to pure tones typically occurs at frequencies between 2,000 Hz and 6,000 Hz. Relative sensitivity remains fairly high between about 250 Hz and 2,000 Hz. Relative sensitivity drops off slightly above 7,000 Hz, and drops off significantly below 200 Hz. In addition, relative sensitivity to different acoustic frequencies also varies with the intensity of the sound. Several different frequency weighting schemes have been developed, using different decibel (dB) adjustment values for each octave or 1/3 octave interval. Some of these weighting schemes are intended to approximate the way the human ear responds to noise levels, others are designed to account for the response of building materials to airborne vibrations and sound. The most commonly used decibel weighting schemes are the A-weighted and C-weighted scales.

The "A-weighted" decibel scale (dBA) is normally used to approximate human hearing response to sound. The A-weighted scale significantly reduces the measured pressure level for low frequency sounds while slightly increasing the measured pressure level for some middle frequency sounds. The "C-weighted" decibel scale (dBC) is often used to characterize low frequency sounds capable of inducing vibrations in buildings or other structures. The C-weighted scale makes only minor reductions to the measured pressure level for low frequency components of a sound while making slightly greater reductions to high frequency components than does the A-weighted scale.

**Common Noise Descriptors**

Varying noise levels are often described in terms of the equivalent constant decibel level. Equivalent noise levels (Leq) are used to develop single-value descriptions of average noise exposure over various periods. Such average noise exposure ratings often include additional weighting factors for annoyance potential due to time of day or other considerations. The Leq data used for these average noise exposure descriptors are generally based on A-weighted sound level measurements, although other weighting systems are used for special conditions (such as blasting noise).

Average noise exposure over a 24-hour period is often presented as a day-night average sound level (Ldn) or a community noise equivalent level (CNEL). Ldn values are calculated from hourly Leq values, with the Leq values for the nighttime period (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM) increased by 10 dB to reflect the greater disturbance potential from nighttime noises. CNEL values are very similar to Ldn values, but include a 5 dB annoyance adjustment for evening (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM) Leq values in addition to the 10 dB adjustment for nighttime Leq values. Except in unusual situations, the CNEL descriptor will be within 1.5 dB of the Ldn descriptor for the same set of noise measurements. Unless specifically noted otherwise, Ldn and CNEL values are assumed to be based on dBA measurements.

**Working with Decibel Values**

The nature of dB scales is such that individual dB ratings for different noise sources cannot be added directly to give the dB rating of the combination of those sources. Two noise sources producing equal dB ratings at a given location will produce a composite noise level 3 dB greater than either sound alone. When two noise sources differ by 10 dB, the composite noise level will be only 0.4 dB greater than the louder source alone. Most people have difficulty distinguishing the louder of two noise sources that differ by less than 1.5 to 2 dB. In general, a 10 dB increase in noise level is perceived as a doubling in loudness. A 2 dB increase represents a 15 percent increase in loudness, a 3 dB increase is a 23 percent increase in loudness, and a 5 dB increase is a 41 percent increase in loudness.

When distance is the only factor considered, sound levels from an isolated noise source will typically decrease by about 6 dB for every doubling of distance away from the noise source. When the noise source is essentially a continuous line (e.g., vehicle traffic on a highway), noise levels decrease by about 3 dB for every doubling of distance.

**Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations**

Response to Comment N-18729 (Page 4 of 10):

**GEO-1:**

As indicated in Section 3.12 of the EIS public health and safety regarding earthquake-related hazards are addressed by the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act, State Seismic Hazards Mapping Act, and the California Building Code. Section 4.12.1.1 and 4.12.1.2 of the EIS discuss methodology and evaluation criteria, respectively, in regards to the analysis for impacts to geological resources in regards to the identified regulatory framework.

**CR-1:**

Section 2.8.5 identifies Special Conservation Measures that would be implemented to manage cultural resources, including paleontological resources.

**PHS-1:**

The list of Regulatory Framework provided has been reviewed and incorporated into the EIS as appropriate.

NOI-1

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Various federal, state, and local agencies have developed guidelines for evaluating land use compatibility under different noise level ranges. The federal Noise Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-574) established a requirement that all federal agencies must administer their programs in a manner that promotes an environment free from noise that jeopardizes public health or welfare. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was given the responsibility for: providing information to the public regarding identifiable effects of noise on public health or welfare, publishing information on the levels of environmental noise that will protect the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety, coordinating federal research and activities related to noise control, and establishing federal noise emission standards for selected products distributed in interstate commerce. The federal Noise Control Act also directed all federal agencies to comply with applicable federal, state, interstate, and local noise control regulations to the same extent that any person is subject to such requirements.

Although EPA was given major public information and federal agency coordination roles, each federal agency retains authority to adopt noise regulations pertaining to agency programs. EPA can require other federal agencies to justify their noise regulations in terms of the federal Noise Control Act policy requirements, but has no authority to approve or disapprove the noise regulations and policies of other federal agencies. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has primary authority for setting workplace noise exposure standards. Due to aviation safety considerations, the Federal Aviation Administration has primary jurisdiction over aircraft noise standards.

*Federal Criteria and Standards*

In response to the requirements of the federal Noise Control Act, EPA (1974) has identified indoor and outdoor noise limits to protect public health and welfare (hearing damage, sleep disturbance, and communication disruption). Outdoor Ldn values of 55 dB and indoor Ldn values of 45 dB are identified as desirable to protect against speech interference and sleep disturbance for residential, educational, and health care areas. Noise level criteria to protect against hearing damage in commercial and industrial areas are identified as 24-hour Leq values of 70 dB (both outdoors and indoors).

In 1980 the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (FICUN) developed guidelines to evaluate whether existing and proposed land uses are compatible with prevailing noise levels. The primary federal agencies participating in the FICUN report included EPA, the Department of Defense, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation, and the Veterans Administration. The FICUN guidelines address land use compatibility and recommend building design considerations according to three noise level categories.

Zone 1 = Ldn or CNEL levels below 65 dB;  
Zone 2 = Ldn or CNEL levels of 65 to 75 dB; and  
Zone 3 = Ldn or CNEL levels above 75 dB.

The FICUN guidelines indicate that all land uses are compatible with Zone 1 noise levels. Educational and residential land uses generally are not compatible with Zone 2 noise levels unless special acoustic treatments and designs are used to ensure acceptable interior noise levels. Residential and educational land uses are not compatible with Zone 3 noise levels. Industrial and manufacturing land uses may be acceptable in Zone 3 areas if special building designs and other measures are implemented.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has adopted criteria for evaluating noise impacts associated with federally funded highway projects and for determining whether these impacts are sufficient to justify funding noise mitigation actions (47 FR 13129653-29656). FHWA noise abatement criteria are based on peak hour Leq noise levels, not Ldn or 24-hour Leq values. The peak 1-hour Leq criteria for residential, educational, and health care facilities are 67 dB outdoors and 52 dB indoors. The peak 1-hour Leq criterion for commercial and industrial areas is 72 dB (outdoors).

The relationship between peak hour Leq values and associated Ldn values depends on the distribution of traffic over the entire day. There is no precise way to convert a peak hour Leq value to an Ldn value. In urban areas with heavy traffic, the peak hour Leq value is typically 2 to 4 dB lower than the daily Ldn value. In less heavily developed areas, the peak hour Leq is often equal to the daily Ldn value. For rural areas with little nighttime traffic, the peak hour Leq value will often be 3 to 4 dB greater than the daily Ldn value.

HUD has established guidelines for evaluating noise impacts on residential projects seeking financial support under various grant programs (44 FR 13540860-40866). Sites are generally considered acceptable for residential use if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values of 65 dB or less. Sites are considered "normally unacceptable" if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values of 65 to 75 dB. Sites are considered unacceptable if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values above 75 dB.

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18729 (Page 5 of 10):

GEN-1:

No glossary or index has been included with the EIS. A summary "How To Use This Document" is provided on the backside of the cover page and a table of contents occurs at the beginning of the EIS to provide a layout of document content. As required by NEPA, the EIS was written at a level that is understandable by the public and technical jargon is explained as needed within each resource section.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

*State Criteria and Standards*

The California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2003) has published guidelines for the noise element of local general plans. These guidelines include a noise level/land use compatibility chart that categorizes outdoor CNEL/Ldn levels into as many as four compatibility categories (normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable), depending on land use. For many land uses, the chart shows overlapping CNEL/Ldn ranges for two or more compatibility categories.

The noise element guidelines chart identifies the normally acceptable range for low density residential uses as CNEL/Ldn values less than 60 dB, while the conditionally acceptable range is 55 to 70 dB. The normally acceptable range for high density residential uses is identified as CNEL/Ldn values below 65 dB, while the conditionally acceptable range is identified as 60 to 70 dB. For educational and medical facilities, CNEL/Ldn values below 70 dB are considered normally acceptable, while values of 60 to 70 dB are considered conditionally acceptable. For office and commercial land uses, CNEL/Ldn values below 70 dB are considered normally acceptable, while values of 67.5 to 77.5 dB are categorized as conditionally acceptable. The overlapping CNEL/Ldn ranges are intended to indicate that local conditions (existing noise levels and community attitudes toward dominant noise sources) should be considered in evaluating land use compatibility at specific locations.

*Local Criteria and Standards*

Cities and counties in California are required to adopt a noise element as part of their general plans. Many cities and counties have incorporated the California Department of Health Services land use compatibility guidelines as a key item in the general plan noise element, while other cities and counties have developed their own land use compatibility guidelines. In addition to local general plan noise elements, some cities and counties have adopted noise ordinances to legally define noise nuisances. Local noise ordinances vary considerably in their format and coverage. Many noise ordinances establish property line performance standards for different land use or zoning categories. There is considerable variation among communities as to the types of noise sources covered under local noise ordinances.

The DEIS must say if there is a noise element of the San Bernardino County General Plan that identifies noise-sensitive land uses for: ?

- Residential uses,
- Schools,
- Hospitals,
- Rest homes,
- Long-term care facilities,
- Mental care facilities,
- Libraries,
- Places of worship, and
- Passive recreation uses.

Your EIS must identify if San Bernardino County has adopted land use compatibility criteria as part of the noise element of the County Land Use Plan.

In Riverside County, for example, the noise element of the County General Plan includes numerous policies intended to minimize noise-related conflicts between adjacent types of land uses. These policies include the following:

- Discourage noise-sensitive land uses from being located in areas exposed to CNEL levels above 65 dBA;
- Guide noise-tolerant land uses into areas committed to land uses that are noise-producing, such as transportation corridors or areas adjacent to airports;
- Minimize noise spillover or encroachment from commercial and industrial land uses into adjoining residential neighborhoods or noise-sensitive areas;
- Discourage projects that cannot successfully mitigate excessive noise;
- Require commercial or industrial truck delivery hours to be limited when next to noise-sensitive land uses unless there is no feasible alternative or there are overriding transportation benefits;

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- New land use development within Airport Influence Areas should comply with airport land use noise compatibility criteria contained in the applicable airport land use compatibility plan;
- Require development that generates increased traffic and subsequent increases in ambient noise level adjacent to noise-sensitive land uses to provide for appropriate mitigation measures;
- Ensure that construction activities are regulated to establish hours of operation in order to prevent or mitigate the generation of excessive or adverse noise impacts on surrounding areas;
- Require that all construction equipment utilize noise reduction features (such as mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than those originally installed by the manufacturer; and
- Consider the issue of adjacent residential land uses when designing and configuring all new non-residential development. Design and configure on-site ingress and egress points to divert traffic away from nearby noise-sensitive land uses to the greatest degree practicable.

The DEIS must also identify if the noise element of the San Bernardino County General Plan also identifies preferred noise standards for stationary noise sources that affect residential land uses.

Again as an example, Riverside County has adopted a noise ordinance (Ordinance 847) to regulate noise sources on one property that may impact adjacent properties. The noise ordinance sets general noise standards according to the land use designation of the affected property. Table 3.10-4 summarizes the basic noise standards in Riverside County Ordinance 847. The Riverside County noise ordinance also includes special provisions related to sound amplification systems, live music, audio equipment, and power tools. The noise ordinance also provides for exceptions from the general and special noise standard provisions.

**Vibration**

The DEIS does not adequately analyze the impacts of vibration.

Ground-borne vibrations can be a source of annoyance to people or a source of structural damage to some types of buildings. Although vibration measurements can be presented in many different forms, peak particle velocity (PPV) is the unit of measure used most often to assess building damage potential. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has identified vibration impact criteria for both building damage potential and human annoyance (Caltrans 2002, 2004). These references are listed below. Both human annoyance effects and building damage effects depend in part on whether vibration events are isolated, discrete events or a relatively continuous episode of vibrations. In general, there is less sensitivity to single, discrete events than to continuous events or frequently repeated discrete events.

You must utilize the following references for adequate analysis:

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2002. Transportation Related Earibhorne Vibrations. Technical Advisory TAV-02-01-R9601. Sacramento, CA. Internet Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise/publications.htm>. Accessed on March 04, 2008.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2004. Transportation- and Construction-Induced Ground Vibration Guidance Manual. Prepared by Jones & Stokes. Sacramento, CA. Internet Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/env/noise>. Accessed on March 04, 2008.

The EIS must summarize Caltrans criteria for assessing the effects of ground-borne vibration. Type of criteria can be either human response OR building damage. Threshold conditions pertain to the perceptibility for human response, or it can involve varying levels of cosmetic damage for building damage. The DEIS must analyze the peak particle velocity in inches/second to determine if vibration thresholds will be exceeded, especially as a result of transient and/or continuous/frequent sources in all areas and airspace proposed for possible acquisition by the U.S. Marine Corps.

The DEIS must also include consideration of ground-borne vibrations. The following land uses are typically identified by the noise element in a County land use plan as being vibration sensitive:

- Hospitals,
- Residential areas,

NOI-1

- Concert halls,
- Libraries,
- Sensitive research operations,
- Schools, and
- Offices.

The DEIS must consider noise and vibration mitigation to vibration include the following:

- Restrict the placement of sensitive land uses in proximity to vibration-producing land uses, and
- Prohibit the exposure of residential dwellings to ground vibration from passing trains that would be perceptible on the ground or second floors (vibrations are presumed to be perceptible if they exceed a peak particle velocity of 0.01 inch per second over a range of 1 to 100 Hz)

NOI-1

**GEOLOGY AND EARTHQUAKE HAZARD**

The DEIS is not adequate in its recognition and analysis of compliance with the following application State of California laws:

*Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act*

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 regulates development and construction of buildings intended for human occupancy to avoid the hazard of surface fault rupture. This act provides mitigation against surface fault rupture of known active faults beneath occupied structures, and requires disclosure of the presence of any seismic faults to potential real estate buyers and a 50-foot setback for new occupied buildings. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act helps define where fault rupture is most likely to occur. This act groups faults into categories of active, potentially active, and inactive. **This information must be disclosed in the EIS.**

GEO-1

*Seismic Hazards Mapping Act*

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990 directs the California Geological Survey to delineate seismic hazard zones. The purpose of this act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety, and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. These seismic hazards include areas that are subject to the effects of strong ground shaking such as liquefaction, landslides, tsunamis and seiches. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps developed by the California Geological Survey in their land use planning and permitting processes. This act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations **Those must be undertaken before any land acquisition can proceed. This information must be disclosed in the EIS.**

**PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Paleontological resources constitute a fragile and nonrenewable scientific record of the history of life on earth. The BLM policy is to manage paleontological resources for scientific, educational, and recreational values and to protect these resources from adverse impacts. To accomplish this goal, the USMC and your cooperating agency (BLM) must ensure that proposed land uses that it initiates or authorizes do not inadvertently damage or destroy important paleontological resources or public lands.

To ensure the protection of paleontological resources, the USMC considers paleontological data as early as possible in the decision-making process for any project. As part of this ongoing consideration, the USMC and BLM must collate existing information on paleontological resources and uses this information to classify the geologic formations present for their potential to contain vertebrate fossils or invertebrate or plant fossils that are scientifically important. **The EIS must include this information.**

CR-1

**Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations**

The major laws protecting paleontological resources on federal lands include the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA) which was signed into law as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (OPLA) of 2009. The PRPA requires the Secretary of the Interior to manage and protect paleontological resources on federal land using scientific principles and expertise, and requires the USMC to develop appropriate plans for inventorying, monitoring, and the scientific and educational use of paleontological resources, in accordance with applicable agency laws, regulations, and policies. Where possible, these plans should emphasize interagency coordination and collaborative efforts with non-federal partners, the scientific community, and the general public.

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Other major authorities protecting paleontological resources on federal lands are the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), NEPA, and various sections of regulations.

While paleontological resources are often discussed in parallel to or linked with historical and cultural resources in planning and environmental impact analyses, the identification and classification of paleontological resources is based on geologic units. BLM is a cooperator on your EIS. Therefore, you should use their system for analyzing impacts on paleontological resources. On October 15, 2007, the BLM formalized the use of a new classification system for identifying fossil potential on public lands with the release of instruction memorandum IM 2008-009. The Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system is based on the potential for the occurrence of significant paleontological resources in a geologic unit, and the associated risk for impacts to the resource based on federal management actions. Occurrences of paleontological resources are closely tied to the geologic units (i.e., formations, members, or beds) that contain them.

Using the PFYC system, geologic units are classified (Class 1 – Very Low through Class 5 – Very High) based on the relative abundance of vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils and their sensitivity to adverse impacts, with a higher class number indicating a higher potential. It is used to set management policies and not intended to be applied to specific paleontological localities or small areas within units.

While they are being updated to reflect the requirements of the PRPA and the PFYC system, the BLM Manual 8270 and BLM Handbook H-8270-1 contain the agency's guidance for managing paleontological resources on public land. The manual has more information on the authorities and regulations related to paleontological resources. The handbook gives procedures for permit issuance, requirements for qualified applicants, information on paleontology and planning, and a classification system for potential fossil-bearing geologic formations on public lands.

Your DEIS is currently not adequate in its analysis on paleontological resources.

**PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS**

*Oil Pollution Prevention (40 CFR Part 112)*

The goal of the oil pollution prevention regulation in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 112 is to prevent oil discharges from reaching navigable waters of the United States or adjoining shorelines. Facilities that could reasonably be expected to discharge oil into navigable waters in quantities that may be harmful are required to develop and implement Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) plans per the SPCC rule.

*Occupational Safety and Health Administration*

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) administers health standards that: (1) provide regulations for safety in the workplace; (2) regulate construction safety; and (3) require a Hazards Communication Plan. The plan includes identification and inventory of all hazardous materials for which Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) would be maintained, and employee training in safe handling of said materials.

*Federal Aviation Administration Regulations (14 CFR 77)*

Title 14 CFR Section 77 contains standards for determining physical obstructions to navigable airspace. Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration, must be filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) if an object to be constructed has the potential to affect navigable airspace according to these standards.

*Federal Transportation Regulations (49 CFR, Subtitle B)*

Title 49 CFR, Subtitle B, contains procedures and regulations pertaining to interstate and intrastate transport, including hazardous materials program procedures, and

*State of California*

*California Environmental Protection Agency*

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) unifies California's environmental authority, consolidating the California Air Resources Board (CARB), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB),

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Integrated Waste Management Board (IWMB), the DTSC, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), and the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) under one agency. The California Hazardous Waste Control Law is administered by Cal EPA's DTSC.

*Department of Toxic Substance Control*

The DTSC is the primary agency in California that regulates hazardous waste, administers clean-ups of existing contamination and looks for ways to reduce hazardous waste produced in California. The DTSC regulates hazardous waste in California primarily under the authority of RCRA and the California Health and Safety Code. The DTSC manages, maintains and monitors the Cortese list of hazardous waste sites. The Cortese list, or Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List, is a planning resource used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites.

*California Emergency Management Agency*

The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal/EMA) was formed January 1, 2009 as a result of a merger between the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Office of Homeland Security. The Hazardous Materials Unit of the Cal/EMA is responsible for HAZMAT emergency planning and response, spill release notifications, and HAZMAT enforcement of the Unified Program. The OES provides emergency response services in support of local jurisdictions.

*California Public Utilities Commission*

You must state and analyze whether you would use the CPUC General Order 95 and 165, as related to fire-safe design and maintenance practices for transmission lines, to establish minimum requirements for the Project regarding inspection (including maximum allowable inspection cycle lengths), condition rating, scheduling and performance of corrective action, record keeping and reporting, in order to ensure a safe and high-quality electrical service.

*California Vehicle Code*

The California Vehicle Code contains regulations applicable to roadway damage, licensing, size, weight, and load of vehicles operated on highways; safe operation of vehicles; and the transportation of hazardous materials.

*San Bernardino County*

The DEIS has not adequately addressed all applicable plans, policies and regulation of the:

County of San Bernardino Department of Environmental Health

County of San Bernardino Fire Department

All Other Applicable San Bernardino County Departments

**OTHER COMMENTS**

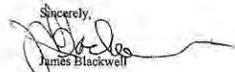
Please include a glossary in the EIS.

Due to the volume and complexity of this project and EIS, please extend the comment period for an additional 90 days.

Please schedule formal public hearings on this proposal.

PHS-1

GEN-1

Sincerely,  
  
James Blackwell

Comment ID: N-18730 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18730  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

4505 Maryland Parkway  
RAJ 280 Box 452040  
Las Vegas, Nevada 89154-2040

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

To whom it may concern:

Despite your best intentions to get the 29 Palms EIS in compliance with CEQ implementation regulations for NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508), you have failed. The following are my comments, along with relevant references to the CEQ regulations that you have failed to comply with:

**Cover Sheet:**

- \* You have not identified the cooperating agencies assisting with this project §1502.11 (a)
- \* CEQ requires a one-paragraph abstract, and you have put in four §1502.11 (e)
- \* You have not identified when comments must be received §1502.11 (f)
- \* Regarding agency-specific requirements, you have not provided a proper reference to the Marine Corps Order P5090.2A, Change 2. Include that item in your references cited.

NEPA-1

**Summary:**

- \* CEQ requires it to be less than 15 pages §1502.12. With the 4 tables, your summary is 36 pages.
- \* You have failed to stress major conclusions §1502.12
- \* You fail to stress areas of controversy §1502.12
- \* You fail to stress issues raised by agencies, by the public and those that be resolved §1502.12

NEPA-2

**Table of Contents:**

- \* Your page numbering is messed up. Numbers run sequentially for chapter 1 and 2, but then you just give section references for chapter 3 and 4 before going back to sequential page numbering for chapter 5 until end. Use sequential numbering for all chapters.

NEPA-3

**Purpose and Need:**

- \* You have failed to relate the Purpose & Need to alternatives including the proposed action §1502.13

NEPA-4

**Proposed Action and Alternatives:**

- \* You have failed to base this section on information/analysis in sections on Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences §1502.14
- \* You have failed to rigorously explore all reasonable alternatives §1502.14 (a). While you study the east half of Johnson Valley, you don't study just the north half or just the south half.
- \* You have failed to objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives §1502.14 (a). You haven't studied the repeal of wilderness areas to the east of the base. To meet your needs, you haven't studied the possibility of putting training corridors through the wilderness areas to the south and east of the base.
- \* You haven't adequately stated why certain alternatives were eliminated from detailed study §1502.14 (a). For example, your reasoning for not studying an integrated training area with the Army is inadequate, as is the reason for not studying the repeal of wilderness areas.
- \* You have failed to include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the agency §1502.14 (c). The examples above are just a few that you need to study.
- \* You have not included mitigation measures in this section not described elsewhere §1502.14 (f)

NEPA-5

Response to Comment N-18730 (Page 1 of 3):

**NEPA-1:**

Thank you for your comment. The FEIS will have a CEQ compliant cover sheet. As for the abstract, a document of this size justifies more than one paragraph.

**NEPA-2:**

The CEQ regulations at 40 CFR § 1502.12 do not require a Summary to be less than 15 pages. The regulations say a Summary should usually be no longer than 15 pages. The longer the document, the longer the Summary will likely be. Major conclusions are found in Table ES-2. Areas of controversy, as raised during the scoping process are addressed on pages ES-5 and ES-6.

**NEPA-3:**

Comment noted.

**NEPA-4:**

The cited regulation requires the EIS to briefly specify the underlying purpose and need of the proposed action. Paragraph 1.3.1 on page 1-4 of the DEIS states the who, what, where, when and why of the proposed action. How the purpose and need relates to the proposed action is addressed in Chapter 2 of the DEIS. The screening criteria for alternatives are included in Section 2.3

**NEPA-5:**

*Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's NEPA Regulations* (46 Fed. Reg. 18026) clarifies the CEQ regulations, "In order to avoid duplication between these two [alternatives and environmental consequences] sections, most of the 'alternatives' section should be devoted to describing and comparing the alternatives." Chapter 2 presents the alternatives in comparative form and is indeed based on

Comment ID: N-18730 (Page 2 of 3)

**Affected Environment:**

- It is unclear how many total pages are in this chapter, but it is not "succinct description" as required by CEQ regulation §1502.15
- This chapter should be "no longer than necessary to understand the effects of alternatives" §1502.15. In sections where you conclude No Impacts or Less than Significant Impacts, you should make those Affected Environment sections much more succinct.
- These sections are to be "commensurate with importance of impacts" §1502.15. In sections where you conclude No Impacts or Less than Significant Impacts, you should make those Affected Environment sections much more succinct.
- Your DEIS is inadequate because you have not attempted to "summarize, consolidate, or reference less important material" in accord with CEQ reg §1502.15
- Your DEIS is inadequate because you have not attempted to "concentrate effort and attention on the important issues" per CEQ reg §1502.15

NEPA-6

**Environmental Consequences:**

- This section is meant to be the scientific and analytic basis for comparison of alternatives §1502.16. You have failed to show the adverse effects which cannot be avoided 102(2)(C) i.
- While some direct effects are show, you have not provided thresholds (in terms of quantification, scope, magnitude, duration, intensity) to clearly show their significance with substantiated conclusions § 1502.16 (a). For example, it could be argued that impacts to local businesses would be significant rather than "less than significant." One person's business failing is very significant to that business and its owner.
- You have failed to indicate indirect effects and significance § 1502.16 (b). For example, the failure of one business will have domino effects on our associated business, as well as recreation, tourism
- You fail to show conflicts with various laws, other plans and policies § 1502.16 (c)
- You need to analyze and quantify the energy requirements and conservation potentials of alternatives and mitigation measures. It is required by CEQ regulation § 1502.16(e)
- You fail to indicate the natural or depletable resource requirements and conservation potentials of alternatives and mitigation measures § 1502.16 (f)
- You are required to show the urban quality, historic and cultural resources, and design of the built environment, including reuse and conservation potential of alternatives and mitigation measures § 1502.16 (g)
- You have failed to show adequate mitigation measures § 1502.16 (h). Many examples include finding replacement wheeling areas to open, a BLM land sale program with money raised to purchase new areas, Congressional appropriations for OHV land purchase, signing, boundary marking, law enforcement support, public outreach, planning, coordination, a public committee to provide oversight in the restricted area.
- Your section on cumulative impacts is not complete § 1508.7. There are many additional projects that have not been included. For example, see the latest list of wind, solar, geothermal projects maintained by BLM.
- The EIS should use conditional language (e.g. "Would" instead of "Will") when describing the proposed action, alternatives, impacts and the future. For example your "Environmental Consequences" section has many instances of the word "will" when it should be "would" in the majority of cases, especially in reference to impacts. This use of "will" instead of "would" is very prevalent in the geology, transportation, airspace and biology sections of chapter 4.

NEPA-7

**Appendix:**

- These are meant to be material prepared specifically for EIS § 1502.18, and which substantiate fundamental analyses § 1502.18. Appendices are supposed to be analytic and relevant to decision § 1502.18. Appendix B is not needed. The information in Appendix B is already within the EIS.

NEPA-8

Response to Comment N-18730 (Page 2 of 3):

**NEPA-5 Continued:**

the information and analysis of Chapters 3 and 4. All reasonable alternatives, i.e., those meeting the selection criteria and the purpose and need of the proposed action, are considered. The alternatives you suggest do not meet these standards. Section 2.7 on pages 2-95 to 2-99 discusses why a variety of alternatives were considered but eliminated. Section 2.8 on pages 2-99 to 2-107 describes Special Conservation Measures that are part of the proposed action. Potential mitigation measures are addressed in Chapter 4. Table ES-28 in the Executive Summary and Table 6-2 in Chapter 6 cover all mitigation measures.

**NEPA-6:**

The Affected Environment section presents the baseline conditions that would continue under the No-Action Alternative. The description of the affected environment as presented in the EIS enables decisionmakers, resource agencies, and the public to compare the magnitude of environmental effects of the action alternatives. Chapter 3 on the Affected Environment seeks to provide the reader with the essential information on each resource area. Resource areas of greater impact importance are comparatively longer than are those of less impact. For example, the Transportation and Circulation section is seven pages in length, while the Biological Resources section is 62 pages.

**NEPA-7:**

Chapter 4 begins each resource section by explaining the methodology used to analyze each alternative's impact on that resource area, the evaluation criteria used to determine the significance of such impacts, and issues that were raised about each

**Comment ID: N-18730 (Page 3 of 3)**

- The air quality section fails to evaluate whether the action and alternatives would be subject to New Source Performance Standards.
- The air quality section fails to evaluate whether the action and alternatives would be subject to National Emissions Standards for Hazardous Air Pollutants.
- You must show the results and conclusions of consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- The EIS must analyze the impacts of the action on biodiversity of the affected ecosystem, including genetic diversity and species diversity.
- The EIS must quantify the habitat types and provide estimates by type for the amount of habitat lost or adversely affected.
- The EIS must consider and show the measures to protect, restore and enhance wildlife habitat.
- The EIS must consider a reasonable spectrum of potential accident scenarios that could occur over the life of the proposed action, including the maximum reasonably foreseeable accident. This is especially important within all areas to be shared with the public, as well as for transportation accidents.

NEPA-8

I look forward to seeing how you address all my comments in the Final EIS.

Yours truly,  
James Howell

**Response to Comment N-18730 (Page 3 of 3):**

**NEPA-7 Continued:**

resource area during the public scoping process. Both direct and indirect impacts area analyzed. Each resource section concludes with a summary of impacts for each alternative. The geographic and temporal boundaries for the Cumulative Effects section are described in Section 5.2. Finally, the EIS does use conditional language, i.e., “would” instead of “will” throughout the document. The USMC has reviewed the EIS to ensure there are no improper uses of “will.”

**NEPA-8:**

Appendix B provides the reader with a more detailed description of all 23 training areas and any current restriction or focused uses that may apply. None of the activities, or operations contemplated by the proposed action would result in stationary or area sources of hazardous air pollutants. Similarly, the proposed action implicates no source category governed by emissions guidelines or new source performance standards. All mobile sources would be in compliance with all requirements of applicable regulations and standards.

This is a Draft EIS; consultation with the USFWS was ongoing at the time of the DEIS publication. Final results of that consultation are included in the FEIS. The DEIS thoroughly analyzes the impacts of each alternative on various biological resources. See Section 4.10-1 to 4.10-60. Special Conservation Measures for biological resources are described in Section 2.8.4. Potential mitigation measures are also described in Section 4.10. Public Health and Safety, including traffic accidents, are addressed in Sections 4.4 and 4.6.

Comment ID: N-18731 (Page 1 of 4)

Comment ID: N-18731  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

4555 Burley Drive, Suite A  
Pocatello, ID 83202-1921

Dear sirs:

The EIS for the Twentynine Palms USMC base expansion is deficient because it has not adequately or accurately analyzed the potential for the Marine Corps and Army to "train as they fight," side-by-side. I could find no reference to a "Marine Corps Operations" document that is mentioned and linked on your project website:

<http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS/pages/links.aspx>

The link to the "Marine Corps Operations" manual is:

[www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service\\_pubs/mcdp10.pdf](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/service_pubs/mcdp10.pdf)

The document is "MCDP 1-0" and coded as "PCN 142 000014 00"

Below are key excerpts and quotes from Marine Corps Operations that must be developed into a new alternative calling for the Marines to "train as they fight" with the Army. Two new alternatives should find a way for the USMC and Army to close either MCAGCC or NTC and train together in a joint environment. There is Corps Bias Against Integration. On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." This is unacceptable and two new alternatives need to be developed that includes JOINT, UNIFIED & MULTINATIONAL Operations. One alternative would be to close MCAGCC and train at NTC. The other alternative would be to close NTC and train together at MCAGCC.

**UNIFIED ACTION**

Unified action is a generic term that refers to a broad scope of activities (including the synchronization of activities with governmental and nongovernmental agencies) taking place within unified commands, sub-unified commands, or joint task forces under the overall direction of the commanders of those commands. The national military strategy calls for the Marine Corps to act as part of fully interoperable and integrated joint forces. The joint force commander synchronizes the employment of Marine Corps forces with that of the other Services to fully exploit the capabilities of the joint force and to effectively and efficiently accomplish the mission.

**Joint Operations**

Joint operations are operations that include forces of two or more Military Departments under a single commander. Joint force commanders use joint forces within their AOs to participate in engagement activities and to conduct military operations in support of the geographic combatant commanders' contingency and war plans. Combatant commanders and their staffs are responsible for preparing plans for engagement with other nations and their forces throughout the theater. They also must prepare and maintain contingency and war plans for their theater of operations.

Engagement is the use of military forces to contribute to regional stability, reduction of potential conflicts, and the deterrence of aggression. Engagement activities are pro-active, conducted at home and abroad, that take advantage of opportunities to shape the international security environment. They include overseas presence, forward deployment, foreign internal development, and alliance and coalition training and exercises.

Contingency plans are plans for major contingencies that can reasonably be expected to occur within the theater of operations. Contingency planning can be deliberate or can be conducted under time constraints in crisis action planning. Contingency plans differ from operation plans as they are in an abbreviated format and require

Response to Comment N-18731 (Page 1 of 4):

NEPA-1:

Comment noted.

NEPA-2:

NEPA-1

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

NEPA-2

significant time or considerable expansion or alteration to convert them to operation plans or orders. War plans are completed operation plans for major contingencies such as major theater wars.

One of the techniques the combatant commanders and their staffs employ in contingency and war planning is flexible deterrent options. These are tailored military forces and operations designed to effectively and efficiently accomplish an anticipated mission or meet an unexpected contingency. Joint planners use flexible deterrent options within a planning framework intended to facilitate early decision and rapid response by laying out a range of forces and capabilities to be employed by the combatant commanders to accomplish particular missions. Flexible deterrent options are carefully tailored to send the right signal to the threat and the United States and world public. These options should include the minimum military force necessary to accomplish the objectives and the coordinated use of economic, diplomatic, and political actions appropriate to the particular situation. For more on Marine Corps participation in joint operations see chapter 3.

**Multinational Operations, Alliances, and Coalitions**

Although the United States may act unilaterally when the situation requires, it pursues its national interests through alliances and coalitions when possible. Alliances and coalitions can provide larger and more capable forces, share the costs of the operation, and enhance the legitimacy of the operation in world and United States public opinion. Multinational operations are usually conducted within the structure of an alliance or coalition. Alliances normally have established agreements for long term objectives, developed contingency plans, and standardized some equipment and procedures to ease interoperability. Coalitions are normally established for shorter periods or for specific multinational operations. They normally do not have established procedures or standardized equipment. However organized, multinational operations normally involve complex cultural issues, interoperability challenges, conflicting national command and control procedures, intelligence sharing, and other support problems. Even long established alliances experience some degree of these obstacles. Unity of command is difficult to achieve in multinational operations. To compensate for this, commanders concentrate on obtaining unity of effort between the participating national forces. Consensus building is the key element in building unity of effort in multinational operations. Multinational operations command and control is usually based on parallel or lead nation command and control structures. Parallel command requires coordinated political and senior military leadership to make decisions and transmit their decisions through existing chains of command to their deployed forces. This is the simplest to establish but limits tempo. Lead nation command and control requires that one nation (usually the one providing the preponderance of forces or capabilities) provides the multinational force commander and uses that nation's command and control system. Other nations' forces are then assigned as subordinate forces. Normally, this structure requires some integration of national staffs.

Multinational commanders must be prepared to accommodate differences in operational and tactical capabilities by nations within the combined force. The commander's intentions, clear guidance, and plans must be articulated to avoid confusion that might occur due to differences in doctrine and terminology. Detailed planning, wargaming, exchange of standing operating procedures and liaison officers, and rehearsals help to overcome procedural difficulties between nations. Finally, the commander should ensure that the missions assigned to nations within the multinational force reflect the specific capabilities and limitations of each national contingent. Mission success should not be jeopardized because of unrealistic expectations of the capabilities or political will of member forces.

**Role and Responsibilities to the Joint Force Commander**

The joint force commander conducts campaigns through a series of related operations. He conducts his campaigns by assigning component commanders missions that accomplish strategic and operational objectives. The orientation of the Marine Corps component commander is normally at the operational level of war, while the MAGTF commander is normally at the tactical level. See figure 3-2. Naturally, there is some overlap. The Marine Corps component commander is normally responsible to set the conditions for Marine Corps tactical

NEPA-2

Comment ID: N-18731 (Page 3 of 4)

Response to Comment N-18731 (Page 3 of 4):

reconnaissance sorties or other military capability made available. The policy for the command and control of Marine Corps aviation, specifically covered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff "Policy for Command and Control of USMC Tactical Air in Sustained Operations Ashore," is found in JP 0-2.

The Marine Corps component commander retains command—OPCON and ADCON—of those Marine Corps forces and capabilities not designated by the joint force commander for tasking by functional component commanders. The Marine Corps component commander advises functional component commanders on the most effective use of Marine Corps forces or capabilities made available. Marine Corps forces or capabilities made available by the joint

force commander respond to the functional component commander for operational matters based on the existing command relationship. All Marine Corps forces receive administrative and logistic support from the Marine Corps component commander. The joint force commander may also establish a support relationship between components to facilitate operations. See MCDP 1-0.1 for more information on the designation and responsibilities of functional component commanders.

Designation of a functional component commander must not affect the command relationships between Service component commanders and the joint force commander. The joint force commander must specifically assign the responsibilities and authority of the functional component commander. He defines the responsibilities and authority based on the concept of operations and may alter these responsibilities and authority during the course of an operation. Functional component commander responsibilities are found in JP 0-2 and JP 3-0, *Doctrine for Joint Operations*.

**JOINT AND MULTINATIONAL OPERATIONS**

Marine forces often deploy for operations as part of a joint or multinational task force. Logistic support of joint or multinational operations may call for compliance with specific operational and administrative requirements that are unique to those operations. Current joint and multinational doctrine provides a standard frame of reference for the planning, direction, and conduct of joint or multinational operations.

Joint and multinational operations are complex and bring together diverse military organizations that must operate together and logistically support one force. Multinational forces may have differences in command and control systems, language, terminology, doctrine, and operating standards.

The following considerations minimize the impact of this diversity and promote efficiency:

\* Liaison is the basis for effective command and control of logistics in joint and multinational operations. Liaison representatives (e.g., liaison officers, liaison teams, couriers) are chosen specifically for their knowledge and familiarity with the capabilities, limitations, and logistic concept of operations of their Service/national organization.

\* The demand for information often exceeds the capabilities of command and control equipment within joint and multinational commands. It is crucial that the commander identify, as early as possible, the command and control requirements that are external to the command or that require the use of national and/or host nation equipment.

\* Standardization of logistic procedures by joint or multinational forces is essential.

\* Agreements are made with probable joint or multinational partners regarding command and control of logistics. These agreements should cover principles, procedures, and overall logistic report requirements (including standard text format, standard databases, and data formats). Agreements should be arrived at by mutual agreement in advance of the operation.

NEPA-2

Comment ID: N-18731 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment N-18731 (Page 4 of 4):

\* Joint or multinational forces adopt the procedures of one Service or nation if command and control agreements have not been determined in advance.

\* The commander of all United States forces provides interpreters to facilitate command and control and ensure that United States interests are adequately protected.

\* The operational acceptability and disclosure or release of communications security to allied governments for multinational operations will be determined and approved by national authorities before entering into discussions with allied nations.

In joint operations, the Services are normally responsible for providing their own logistics. However, the combatant commander, acting through the commanders of the component forces, is responsible for overall logistic coordination. The combatant commander must oversee the logistics for all parts of the unified force and may direct Marine Corps resources to support other Services. The combatant commander is specifically responsible for developing and sustaining military effectiveness by establishing an effective logistic structure. The combatant commander makes recommendations for joint efforts to improve economy consistent with military efficiency, reviews requirements, and recommends priorities and programs. He has the authority to coordinate the logistics of the Service components and to control distribution of that support when shortages occur. The most common type of support is single Service logistic support. However, plans may require or direct the use of other types of support such as common servicing, cross-servicing or joint servicing at the force, theater, military department, or Department of Defense-level.

The Marine Corps component commander may establish a MLC to provide or coordinate operational logistics as an interface between the MAGTF and joint logistic organizations and agencies. The MLC establishes the Marine Corps theater support structure to facilitate reception, staging, onward movement, and integration operations, as well as provide long-term logistic support for sustained operations ashore.

In multinational operations, logistics is a national responsibility. However, agreements may be made to establish the framework for mutual support. The exchange of logistic support between United States forces and alliance or coalition participants can create significant economies of effort and cost savings. This type of logistic support or cross-servicing may be in the form of supplies and/or services. Host-nation support agreements normally establish or specify the type and amount of such support. An acquisition cross-Service agreement is a nation-to-nation bilateral agreement that specifies procedures and points of contact for equal value exchange, replacement in kind or acquisition of goods and services between United States forces and the forces of the given nation. If no appropriate international agreements exist, no authority exists whereby combatant commanders can provide for or accept logistic support from allies or coalition forces. Combatant commanders are not authorized to enter into logistic support relationships with other nations without direction from the National Command Authorities. Under these circumstances, and with National Command Authorities' approval, United States commanders should acquire as much logistical support as possible through tact and diplomacy, their knowledge of the other nation's doctrine, and personal and professional relations with the other nation's commanders and appropriate political leaders. In the absence of approved formal support agreements, authorization for Marine Corps forces to receive logistic support from the other nation's forces or to provide support to these forces must come from higher authority in the operational chain of command. This does not preclude normal contracting of goods and services from the local economy.

NEPA-2

Sincerely,

  
Donald Albright

**Comment ID: N-18732 (Page 1 of 2)**

Comment ID: N-18732  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

1500 West El Camino Ave, #352  
Sacramento, CA 95833-1945  
May 15, 2011

Dear Project Manager,

I am very concerned about the Marine Corps project to expand the base at 29 Palms. On March 26, a Marine Corps representative (Captain Nick Mannweiler) said, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services. We like to have our own aircraft because we think we do it better than the other guys. But we train for everyone to fight on the ground." This indicates a clear bias towards training together with the Army at Ft. Irwin or Ft. Polk. I believe that the military has enough ground (and airspace) for training. Congress should direct the entire Department of Defense to do a study on how to more effectively and efficiently work together to cut costs and eliminate that ever present need for more, more, more land and air restrictions.

At that same meeting, (Mr. Proudfoot) said the following "We spent about eight years studying in detail different options, different pieces of the puzzle." The transcription of this speech is on-line at:

[http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/cdd/upcoming\\_dac\\_meeting/meeting\\_minute\\_s.Par.37191.File.dat/Meeting%20Minutes%20-%20March%2026,%202011.pdf](http://www.blm.gov/pgdata/etc/medialib/blm/ca/pdf/cdd/upcoming_dac_meeting/meeting_minute_s.Par.37191.File.dat/Meeting%20Minutes%20-%20March%2026,%202011.pdf)

Why are you only now informing the public now about this project and asking for our input? You should have asked for public involvement six, seven, eight years ago before lining out all your decisions and now trying to justify them to the public. Future wars will be smaller. Budgets will be smaller. The Marines should find ways to train on the 598,000 acres already provided to them at Twentynine Palms.

Why are you only allowing 90 days for the public to comment? If you have been working on this for 8 years, then you need to give us at least another 90 days to review the draft EIS.

Later in his speech, Mr. Proudfoot said, "if we received other comments that allowed us to find other mitigation elements, that's what we could do."

I request that you find replacement areas for OHV wheeling to mitigate the displacement that would take place. I request that you ask the BLM to sell isolated tracks of land that they don't manage, and then use the income to buy land for off-road recreation. I request that you approach Congress for money to properly mark your base boundaries, install signs, prepare information and education materials, conduct public outreach meetings, hold hearings, and support local law enforcement. You must mitigate all the other impacts you have identified, whether they are significant or less than significant. You should agree to pay relocation costs to private landowners and miners that would be forced to sell and move. You should avoid all

**Response to Comment N-18732 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.).

**Comment ID: N-18732 (Page 2 of 2)**

desert tortoise areas. You should agree to grade and water all roads you use to cut down on air pollution.

Mr. Proudfoot also said "Legally, our requirement is to not search for alternative places to accept the displacement. And at that point that's a legal mandate for our EIS process, meaning what you are really asking is if we support getting out, finding other areas, helping someone else designate the area. That's outside the scope of this project."

I do not agree with this position of the Marine Corps. The National Environmental Policy Act requires you to find mitigation. The BLM is your cooperator. Both agencies must work together to develop a plan for the displacement and problems that will occur if Johnson Valley is closed. You and the BLM need to de-designate areas in order to open them up more for races.

The mitigation in the EIS is not adequate to address the loss of OHV recreation or open area recreation. You must correct this before issuing a Final EIS. You cannot pass the buck, kick the can down the road and expect Congress to come in and direct you and the BLM to identify new areas by such and such a date and so forth.

It was also pointed out the Marine Corps representatives that there may be water districts that have wells that might be impacted. Some of them are board governed, so they have the County of San Bernardino standing behind them. So you must be sensitive to those. You must work out all these boundary issues, as San Bernardino County has hundreds of special districts throughout the county.

Mr. Proudfoot also referred to a "negotiation process" that is currently taking place with the FAA for airspace. The process has not been open to the public. It has not been defined in the EIS. I am fearful that you are negotiating deals with them behind closed doors with proper public scrutiny and transparency. In the EIS, you must explain what negotiations are taking place along with the results of these consultations and discussions. That information must be presented now in the EIS rather than later in some separate document, and after a decision has already been made by the Marine Corps.

I do not agree that the restricted area in Johnson Valley will work. That is an accident waiting to happen. It would be very difficult to enforce and patrol. Also, if you decide to close certain acreage in Johnson Valley for a couple months each year, you should close it for the same two months every year instead of varying that. It would be very confusing if you close land in January and July one year, and then March and September another. Make a schedule and stick to it.

Sincerely,  
Stephen Berg

**Response to Comment N-18732 (Page 2 of 2):**

The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Please see Section 4.7 of the EIS for information on expected impacts to Airspace Management; Jet Routes are discussed in this section. Section 4.7 describes expected significant impacts on Jet Routes transiting within the proposed restricted area. The Marine Corps is working with the FAA to minimize these impacts through advanced planning and coordination efforts. The Marine Corps is sensitive to the potential effects the airspace proposals could have on all commercial and civil aviation activities. The airspace proposals will be reviewed by the FAA in an Aeronautical Study which will examine potential impacts on all airspace uses and those measures to be discussed with the Marine Corps, airport operators, and other aviation interests, to minimize any impacts. The Marine Corps will also continue its outreach to the civil aviation community to discuss those issues and concerns affecting their operations within the Combat Center airspace environment and those measures that can be taken to best accommodate all aviation interests.

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 1 of 9)**

Comment ID: N-18733  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 20, 2011  
38167 Desert Hawk Dr  
Palmdale, CA 93552

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

To whom it may concern:

As an advocate for responsible off-highway vehicle recreation and the Marine Corps also, I feel that there is room to the east of 29 Palms and think the Marines should expand there.

As far as your Draft EIS, I have some serious concerns about the validity of many of your assumptions used in the analysis:

Chapter 1, page 24 and Chapter 2, page 1: It is assumed in this EIS that by the time the proposed action were implemented (approximately 2015), requirements for EMV iterations would likely be reduced to align with pre-war CAX levels of about 4-5 EMV-equivalent exercises annually. This expected reduction would be offset by the increase in MEB Building Block training (see Section 2.1), such that the overall training throughput of tenant and transient units up to a single battalion in size would approximate 2010 levels.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be nothing like their 2010 budget. Assumptions must be clearly tied to reasonable budget projections. As the Defense Department seeks additional cost cuts to support President Barack Obama's deficit-reduction efforts, weapons systems, major procurement programs, acquisitions, and contracted goods and services will all be on the table to find ways to increase buying power. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing by 2015.**

Page 2-35: The vehicle mileage assumed during Building Block training is encompassed in the Air Quality baseline modeling (see Appendix G).

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be reduced. Combined with the increasing costs of gas, you need to assume less vehicle use as a part of overall cost-cutting and energy-savings measures that are sure to be implemented by the Marine Corps. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing, as well as less vehicle and energy use.**

3.2-1: "event-related" visits are assumed to include those participants and spectators of organized OHV races or other similar events that visit exclusively because of a scheduled event (and would not visit if the event were not being held).

Dispersed use visitors are also assumed to include a proportion of race spectators that would come to the project area anyway, even if race events did not occur.

**Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 1 of 9):**

Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: N-18858. Please see response provided for that comment.

Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 2 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 2 of 9):

COMMENT – Please explain why a proportion of race spectators would still come to the area, even if race events did not occur. What proportion are you referring to?

3.2-25: For the purposes of providing an estimated number of visitors for this event alone [KOH], it was assumed that the 15,146 visitors estimated for 2010, visited Johnson Valley for an average of 3 days; therefore, the total visitor-days of use for this event in 2010 was estimated to be 45,438 visitor-days of use.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it's not consistent with the BLM's use data for this one event. The event promoter is required to accurately submit visitor use data, and then pay a fee. Rather than make up a number based on an unvalidated assumption, reference the event promoter's official submission to BLM. If you use something different, then you are also publicly showing that the BLM is not doing an adequate, proper job in their permitting process to monitor events, visitor use, and collect appropriate fees.

3.2-26: The visitor-days of use for the King of the Hammers event was estimated separately (45,438 visitor-days). To estimate the visitor-days of use of activity related to other organized events throughout the year, 50% of remaining event visitors were assumed to recreate in Johnson Valley for 2 days and the other 50% of event visitors was estimated to recreate in Johnson Valley for 3 days (BLM 2009).

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it does not take into consideration the many people who camp out and recreate in Johnson Valley for extended periods of time (greater than just 2 or 3 days.) You should also reference the information that organized event promoters submit to BLM. That is supposed to be accurate and is monitored by BLM to ensure that proper event fees are paid.

3.9-8: The projected baseline level of ordnance activity within the Combat Center range complex at the time the proposed action would be implemented (approximately 2014 or 2015) is assumed to be approximately double (2x) the baseline ordnance use modeled in the 2003 noise study, WR 03-11 (Wyle 2003b). An assumed doubling of the ordnance use since 2002 represents the estimated change that has occurred due to higher wartime training requirements and deployments in recent years, and that is expected to continue.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be reduced. Combined with the increasing costs of gas, you need to assume less ordnance activity as a part of overall cost-cutting and energy-savings measures that are sure to be implemented by the Marine Corps. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing, as well as less ordnance use.

3.10-60: Areas that might potentially be affected by new airspace are assumed to be limited to those where new low altitude (e.g., to 1,500 feet [457 meters] above ground surface or lower) limits are established. Aircraft operations at higher altitudes are not likely to affect biological resources because noise levels would be lower and operation would be above the flight altitude of migratory birds.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it has been clearly documented that many kinds of birds fly at altitudes higher than 1,500 feet. Please see the attachment entitled "Migratory Bird Altitude" put out by the USGS.



Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 4 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 4 of 9):

4.1-5: For the purposes of the land use impact analysis, it is assumed that all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and programs related to property acquisition, acquisition of existing rights-of-way, surface and subsurface mining rights, and other property rights and ownership, would apply. For example, this includes purchase of private property at fair market value and, as appropriate, applicable relocation assistance.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because there are no cost estimates in the EIS of how much these things will cost for each of the alternatives. This information must be openly disclosed to the public, as well as factored into the EIS analysis. The Marine Corps does not have an open checkbook. I was told at the public meetings that it would cost about \$50-100 million. This is an unreasonable assumption, especially in light of the efforts to reduce the Dept of Defense's budget.**

4.2-1: Specifically, a Year 2015 baseline estimate of 337,000 average annual visitor-days was assumed in this analysis, based on 2010 visitor data estimated by BLM and the agency's projections for growth in visitors to the area over the next few years.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because you have not factored in the rising cost of gas. Recreation growth is going to decline if it gets too expensive for people to travel long distances to the desert and then feed there gas-guzzlers once there.**

4.2 -1: For purposes of this analysis, a level of 800 visitor-days per year was assumed for the south study area and 500 visitor-days per year was assumed for the east area.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if Johnson Valley and the south areas are closed then you can expect more people to recreate in the east area instead.**

4.2-6: Notes: 1 Assumes that 90% of dispersed use visitor-days under each alternative from Table 4.2-3, would be displaced to other recreation and OHV areas within San Bernardino County. Assumes that none of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas.

**COMMENT – I find it hard to believe that NONE of the events could be accommodated at other regional OHV areas. There are a number of motorcycle races, for example, that could use Stoddard Valley instead. This is not a valid assumption.**

4.2-11: As mentioned above, it is reasonable to assume that roughly 60% of existing racing events, including car and truck races that currently occur within the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be displaced or eliminated.

**COMMENT – This is not clear. How much of the 60% would be displaced vs. eliminated? The statement is also inconsistent with the footnote on page 4.2-6 that says you assumed that "none of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas" for that alternate.**

4.2-20: As mentioned above, it is reasonable to assume that roughly half of the existing racing events, including car and truck races that currently occur within the Johnson Valley OHV Area, would be displaced or eliminated.

**Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 5 of 9)**

**Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 5 of 9):**

**COMMENT – This is not clear. How much of the 60% would be displaced vs. eliminated? The statement is also inconsistent with the footnote on page 4.2-6 that says you assumed that “none of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas” for that alternate.**

4.3-2: for Johnson Valley only, the spending pattern differences based on visitor origin (e.g., “local” visitors are assumed to spend all of the daily amount within the local area, while visitors from outside the county are expected to spend some proportion in their home county before they leave, some on the way, and the rest in the local area during their visit).

**COMMENT – This is not clear. Clarify how much is spent at home, on the way, & in the local area.**

4.3-5: Specifically, a Year 2015 baseline estimate of 337,000 average annual visitor-days was assumed in this analysis, based on 2010 visitor data estimated by BLM and the agency’s projections for growth in visitors to the area over the next few years.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because you have not factored in the rising cost of gas. Recreation growth is going to decline if it gets too expensive for people to travel long distances to the desert and then feed there gas-guzzlers once there.**

Recreational visits to Johnson Valley include a mix of single-day and multi-day trips (the analysis assumed a mix of 20% single-day and 80% multi-day).

For purposes of this analysis, a level of 800 visitor-days per year was assumed for the south study area and 500 visitor-days per year was assumed for the east area: all visits were assumed to be single day instead of multi-day visits and all by local area residents only. See Appendix K for a complete description of modeling assumptions and results.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if Johnson Valley and the south areas are closed then you can expect more people to recreate in the east area instead.**

The assumed baseline level of film industry spending in the project area is approximately \$1.6 million per year, based on the total level of such spending in the Johnson Valley area between 2001 and 2008 (Inland Empire Film Commission 2010a). All benefits of this film industry spending was assumed to accrue to the “local” area within 50 miles (80 km) of Johnson Valley. Half of film industry expenditures were assumed to be taxable at a 10% rate (average transient occupancy tax rate for the area).

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because rising gas costs will keep the film industry closer to home. I would expect the majority of films requiring desert scenes to be shot in the Mojave as close to Hollywood as possible. I expect greater movie filming use in the Palmdale and Lancaster areas.**

As shown in Table 4.3-1, the total estimated direct county-wide expenditures (2015 baseline conditions) related to recreational use of all three acquisition study areas and film industry use of Johnson Valley (including sales tax) is approximately \$8.7 million per year (expressed in 2015 dollars). Approximately \$6 million of this amount is assumed to be spent in the area within 50 miles (80 km) of Johnson Valley. Almost \$7.5 million in additional trip spending is assumed to occur outside the county as visitors travel to Johnson Valley from other counties and states.

Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 6 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 6 of 9):

4.3-6: Alternative 1. In addition, the analysis assumed that 100% of organized race events would be displaced (along with all visitor-days of use associated with such events) and 75% of the visitor-days categorized as dispersed use would not occur.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if the entire area is exclusive military use then dispersed use should also decrease by 100% there. Also, if 100% of the organized events are “displaced,” then you need to state where they will be displaced to and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be “eliminated,” then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.

4.3-7: New military personnel were assumed to be distributed 25% living on the installation and 75% living in surrounding communities. It was also assumed that 70% of all new positions would be filled by people migrating from outside the county.

COMMENT – Is this assumption similar to the current distribution of military personnel on base vs. off base? Provide the current distribution and your rationale for assuming something different. Are 70% of new positions currently filled with people coming in from outside the County? Provide the current percentage and your rationale for assuming something different.

4.3-8: Based on their locations relative to the two main routes used to travel to Johnson Valley, it could be assumed that Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley together benefit from the majority of the “local” spending from Johnson Valley visits.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because I’m sure that many wheelers come to the area along I-10 and I-40, through Barstow and Palm Springs. There will also be impacts to those communities.

4.3-9: As indicated in the analysis described above and in Appendix K, it is conservatively assumed that at least 25% of the total dispersed use OHV activity (which represents 83% of total visitor-days) would continue to occur after implementation of Alternative 1.

COMMENT – How could 25% of the dispersed use continue to occur if the area becomes exclusive for military use?

4.3-14: The socioeconomic analysis assumed that 60% of organized race events would be displaced (along with all visitor-days associated with such use) and 25% of the dispersed use would no longer occur. Based on input from the BLM, the analysis also assumed that 90% of the total annual visitor-days displaced by Alternative 2 in the “local” area (within 50 miles [80 km] of Johnson Valley) would be transferred to the other designated OHV areas and recreational opportunities in the county. Other assumptions used in the analysis are described in Appendix K.

COMMENT – If 60% of the organized events are “displaced,” then you need to state where they will be displaced to and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be “eliminated,” then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.

**Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 7 of 9)**

**Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 7 of 9):**

4.3-21: For purposes of this analysis, it was assumed that the average annual visitor-days of use would be reduced by 15% for both organized events and multi-day dispersed use. Single-day dispersed use visits were assumed to decline by 30%.

**COMMENT - How much will be displaced? How much will be totally eliminated? If 15% of the organized events are "displaced," then you need to state where they will be displaced to and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be "eliminated," then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.**

4.6-5: For the purpose of this analysis, a worst-case scenario is assumed, whereby all 8,000 Marines would arrive by bus on the same day (though this would never likely be the case). This would equate to roughly 200 buses (40 passengers per bus) arriving at the Combat Center on the same day. The greatest percent increase in traffic volume would therefore occur on Lear Avenue (an approximate 6% increase in traffic volume [3,461 vehicles per day to 3,661 vehicles per day]). Such an increase would not meet the threshold of significance (12%) as described in Section 4.6.1.2, and therefore, would not substantiate a significant shift in LOS.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because there is no likelihood that all 8000 Marines would arrive by bus on the same day. While that would be a great reason for a parade in the high desert, please use an assumption for analysis that has more credibility. The EIS itself admits that "this would never likely be the case." Thus, it shouldn't even be presented as a worst-case scenario.**

4.7-2: The number of sortie-operations was assumed to be equally accounted for in multiple SUA areas since the proposed SUA would allow all sortie operations to be more widely dispersed throughout the entire airspace complex.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because MEB exercises don't call for equal dispersement of sorties. If the battalions are moving east to west, then there would be a different dispersement of aircraft in comparison to when they move west to east. Analyze the differences accurately by alternative rather than assume equal dispersement through entire airspace complex.**

4.7-7: Many of the ongoing Combat Center operations are staged out of the Expeditionary Airfield (EAF), as described in Section 3.7.3.1, and it is assumed MEB Exercise aircraft would also operate from this airfield.

**COMMENT – This isn't valid assumption because that airfield isn't equipped to handle F-35s, etc.**

4.8-5: All emissions are assumed to occur in calendar year 2013.

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because emissions will occur over multiple years. The MEB exercises aren't even scheduled to begin until 2015.**

4.9-2: For each of the action alternatives, it was generally assumed that each airspace sortie would generate an arrival and departure at the EAF and no run-ups. The exception would include F-35B aircraft because the EAF matting surface is currently not designed to withstand the temperatures caused by an F-35B performing a rolling vertical landing or a purely vertical landing. No F-35 flight or run-up operations

**Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 8 of 9)**

**Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 8 of 9):**

were modeled at the EAF for any alternative. This is consistent with the F-35B West Coast Basing EIS (DoN 2010).

**COMMENT –** The Draft EIS indicates a variety of other aircraft also. Historical data most likely shows much aircraft used in training missions there as coming from Yuma or other places. Thus, it isn't valid to assume all but the F-35 would generate an arrival and departure at the EAF.

4.9-4: Ordnance operations were assumed to be distributed uniformly across all firing/target locations.

**COMMENT –** This is not a valid assumption because MEB exercises don't call for equal dispersment of ordnance. If the battalions are moving east to west, then there would be a different dispersment of ordnance in comparison to when they move west to east. Analyze the differences accurately by alternative rather than assume uniform dispersment across all firing/target locations. The company objectives and final MEB objective should also receive more ordnance, wouldn't they?

4.9-23: One of the S2 POIs would have CNEL greater than or equal to 62 dBC. The residentially-zoned west study area site would have a CNEL of 64 dBC. However, it is assumed that the west study area site would not have occupied housing.

**COMMENT –** This is not a valid assumption because there is occupied housing within close proximity in Johnson Valley.

4.10-1: The quantitative estimates of disturbance are totals over the project lifetime, which is assumed to be approximately 50 years; however, direct impacts would be greatest when military training under the proposed action begins.

**COMMENT –** Why wouldn't the project lifetime correlate with the term of the military land withdrawal that is being proposed? Isn't that only 20 or 25 years and would be subject to renewal by Congress?

4.10-3: The same basemap was used with GIS analysis to estimate the number of tortoises located within the disturbance footprint, and a presumed amount of take was derived (assumed to be 50% in high-intensity disturbance areas and 10% in medium-intensity disturbance areas). These impact quantifications were limited to anticipated areas of high- and medium-intensity disturbance.

Modeling also assumes that densities would remain constant over the lifetime of the project, does not account for movement of tortoises into or out of disturbed areas, and does not account for recovery of disturbed areas (which would not be expected due to ongoing disturbance and long recovery times). The wide range reported for potential take of desert tortoises is related to the uncertainty in estimating desert tortoise density (Karl 2010). Refer to Appendix 1 for detailed assumptions and methodology used in assessment of impacts to tortoise habitat and take of tortoises.

**COMMENT –** How can you assume a 50% take with all the conservation measures and mitigation that being proposed for tortoises? That seems awfully high. Don't the Marines try to avoid high density tortoise areas whenever possible?

Comment ID: N-18733 (Page 9 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18733 (Page 9 of 9):

4.12-6: This assumes that the two known alternative sources of local iron ore (Baxter Quarry and Silver Lake Mine) would continue to be in production until at least 2020 and 2022, respectively, as per their current SMARA permits (see discussion in Section 3.12.3.2).

**COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because MEE exercises within exclusive military use areas would not be compatible with producing mines. Please explain how those very disparate and clashing uses can jointly occur. Better yet, assume both will have to be closed or bought out by 2015 when the training exercises begin and analyze that in terms of costs and impacts to mining.**

4.13-1: The impact analysis assumed that no additional water infrastructure would be developed to supply water for the training exercises. Instead, it was assumed that all water required to support the training exercises would be supported by existing groundwater supplies at the Combat Center (i.e., the Surprise Spring subbasin), and none of the project alternatives would extract groundwater from the proposed west, south, or east study areas. The analysis also assumed that two or three communication towers (depending on the alternative) would be constructed, with no other permanent structures constructed.

**COMMENT –How long can the existing water supplies last? The visual impacts of communications towers have not been adequately analyzed in the EIS.**

Please keep me informed of all progress on this project.

Sincerely,

Tammy Blackwell

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 1 of 12)**

Comment ID: N-18734  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 15, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Dear sir,

I have many comments of the Draft EIS due to your shortcomings in the Issues, Alternatives and Mitigations sections.

**ISSUES**

I have done a comparison of the issues brought up during scoping with those that you analyzed in the Draft EIS. Even if some issues are not relevant or applicable, you must acknowledge them in the EIS with an indication that you considered them and why they weren't further analyzed. Specifically,

**All Public Scoping Issues** – In each impact section, you typically state the public issues raised as "including but not limited to ..." Your EIS would be much better if you would acknowledge and list all the relevant issues that were raised by the public during scoping.

**Ground Movement** – You have failed to address this issue identified by the public. Your scoping report said you would study "potential impacts of ordnance to aquifers and geologic faults."

**DEIS Reclamation Plan** – You have failed to present a reclamation plan for all the areas that the Marines will be impacting due to erosion, vegetation destruction, etc. In addition, when you acquire contaminated lands, you must also present a plan (with costs) as part of your analysis. An example is on page 4.4-15 where you say "Land that would be acquired as part of Alternative 3 is known to have operations with the potential to contaminate the environment. An example is the America Mine, an open pit gold mine in the east study area that is no longer in use and could require cleanup." How do the Marines propose to do this. Cost?

**FAA Compliance** – You have failed to indicate how the FAA will reroute air traffic to comply with the greater amount of military airspace restrictions. In the scoping report you said you would study "Increased costs to the airline industry from flight corridor alteration and/or scheduling restrictions and conflicts." You have failed to do this.

**Airspace Issues** – On page 4.7-3, you only recognize the public scoping issues that were raised pertaining to airports and airfields. Please list all the relevant airspace issues that were raised in the 20,000 public comments received during scoping.

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 1 of 12):**

Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: N-18857. Please see response provided for that comment.

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 2 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 2 of 12):**

**Examine impacts of action on existing land use plans** – You have failed to address how the expansion would trigger the need for many amendments and updates to existing Federal, State and local land use plans.

**Examine Safety Issues of new boundary** – Management for the "RPAA" is not clearly defined. You fail to lay out the measures needed to ensure clear marking of the boundaries and to ensure public safety. Despite what you said in the scoping report, you have failed to fully study and quantify "the increased costs with installing proper signage in limited use areas and implementing an education campaign regarding location of remaining OHV areas." The costs could be great and better spent elsewhere. You have also failed to fully study and quantify the "increased law enforcement costs to federal, state, and local jurisdiction with respect to enforcing trespassing on private property and other areas where OHV travel is not allowed." Are the local jurisdictions able to bear these increased costs? Will taxes be raised?

**Cumulative loss to OHV** – You have not presented any trend analysis showing the cumulative loss of OHV area over the past four decades. This past, coupled with future foreseeable loss of OHV playground, must be examined as cumulative impact.

**Impacts of Scientific Research** – You need to read and reference such documents as "Impacts of Military Vehicle Training Activities on Vegetation: Bibliography With Abstracts ERDC/CERL Special Report 01-17" by J.S. Fehmi, Tyrone Farmer, and J.A. Zimmerman. The available literature on impacts of military vehicles on military lands was surveyed. The bibliography has been divided into two parts: (1) military references developed from military vehicles or military lands and representing primary observations or research, and (2) supporting references that were not developed from the military but which have applicability to training activities on military lands by military vehicles or are derivative from primary works on the military. This report contains 61 references with abstracts.

**Quality of Life** – You mention air, water and scenic quality, but you failed to analyze one of the most important of all overall qualities to desert residents – quality of life. You must assess the impacts of the project on the quality of life and loss of "desert outdoor experience" in the area.

**Environment Justice** – On page 4.3-29 of the EIS, you say "There are no specific concentrations of minority or low-income populations in the vicinity of the proposed action as defined by Alternative 6 and all socioeconomic or environmental impacts that are attributable to Alternative 6 would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status." This is not an accurate statement because many of the people who live in Lucerne Valley, Landers, and Johnson Valley are low income compared to other areas. To better understand this, just look at the average cost of living and real estate costs there.

**Transportation and Circulation** – On Page 4.6-2, you say "There were no transportation and circulation issues raised during the public scoping period for this

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 3 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 3 of 12):**

EIS." This is simply not true. In your own scoping report, you stated that the following (at a minimum) were brought up by the public for complete study and analysis: 1) Increased usage of utility and infrastructure may impact current systems (e.g., disruption to traffic circulation, impacts to existing communications and energy transmission lines and pipelines, damage to utilities/infrastructure from vehicle movements). 2) Potential impacts to Fire and Police Department times and their ability to provide coverage for acquired lands. 3) Increased waste disposal requirements and the potential for the requirements to be unfulfilled. 4) Impacts on roadways, railroads, and airspace from movement of equipment and personnel to/from the installation for training events. 5) Injuries or impacts from convoy crossings of public roads.

**Carbon Footprint** - On Page 4.8-4, you acknowledge that the public raised an issue regarding "increased carbon footprint." However, you never addressed "carbon footprint" again other than to reference increased levels of carbon monoxide.

**Noise Issues** – On page 4.9-5, you only recognize the public scoping issues that were raised pertaining to noise from additional training activities. Please list all the relevant noise issues that were raised in the 20,000 public comments received during scoping.

**Renewable Energy Opportunity Costs** – You fail to acknowledge, quantify or assess the impacts of the lost renewable energy development opportunities due to the land closure. Your scoping report said you would analyze "Possible prevention of other development opportunities (e.g., solar and wind energy generators as well as geothermal exploration) on the lands being studied."

**Loss of Future Mining Opportunities** - You fail to acknowledge, quantify or assess the impacts of the lost mining development opportunities due to the land's long-term closure. It is unacceptable to say that there is a potential for indirect impacts of this type to occur, but then to conclude that "such impacts are speculative in nature and the level of any such impact cannot be estimated at this time." You must work with the BLM to more adequately present the mineral resources that would be locked up due to military base expansion. On page 4.12-13, you improperly say that "Loss of access to inactive mines and unworked mining claims would not restrict the overall availability of mineral resources (gold in the case of the Vulcan and America Mine sites), so there would be no indirect impacts to mineral resources due to purchase of claims that are unworked or are associated with inactive mines." Any loss of access would, of course, restrict availability.

**Devaluation of surrounding private property** – Living near a military base and the resulting noise and safety issues WILL result in devaluation of property. Your analysis is incorrect to conclude, "If property values were to decline as an indirect impact, the reduction would likely be marginal and less than significant." Your scoping report said you would analyze "Decrease in property value of homes and land located near the expansion area." You have also failed to analyze the direct impact of devaluation on Wonder Valley properties.

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 4 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 4 of 12):**

**Traditions / Archeological and Historical** – On page 4.11-2, you say “During the public scoping process for this proposed project, no comments were received from the public regarding cultural resources.” How can this be? Didn’t the Tribes present some issues? Also your own scoping report says these issues were raised: 1) Impacts to cultural resources of the region, including artifacts, historic coins, and historic mining/freighting sites. 2) Potential destruction or elimination of significant archaeological and religious sites. 3) Violation of tribal concerns and rights, which includes the access to culturally significant sites and the compromise of culturally significant sites and their settings. 4) Possible destruction or elimination of historic structures and/or districts, including potentially historically important mines. 5) Potential impacts to various plant species historically used by Native Americans for subsistence. The impacts to all these items and more (like the historic values of Highway 242) need to be fully disclosed in the EIS.

**Access for Other Activities** – While you mention some activities like hiking, sightseeing and geocaching, you have failed to acknowledge the use of this land by so many others (scouts, model rocketry clubs, ultralite aviators, hang-gliders, landsailers, rockhounds, equestrians etc.) The Partnership for Johnson Valley can fill you in on all the uses that take place out there.

**Accuracy/Adequacy of the Economic Analysis** - The Yucca Valley City Council has better economic data indicating an impact of at least \$5 million. The Johnson Valley Usage Survey that was done at the King of the Hammers shows \$1.6 million dollars spent in the area during the of the 2011 race week alone. Those survey results are very conservative. The economic impact for the communities along Hwy 18, 247 and 62 will be many times more than that \$1.6 million. The economic impact of the Marines going east would be minimal and maybe not even be negative. You need to correct that section in the EIS and also recognize that certain impacts (especially in the cities and towns of the high desert) will be significant as incomes and revenues decline, and businesses fail.

**More of a BLM lead even though it is a military EIS** – Even though BLM is a cooperator, the EIS is inadequate because it appears they have not provided you with information regarding lost energy development opportunities, mineral resource development opportunities, or areas that can be expanded or opened to wheeling as a result of the loss of Johnson Valley.

**Impacts to other current land uses** – You have failed to fully analyze the impacts on the railways, gas lines, SCE distribution lines and facilities, and especially all the impacts on rights-of-way, easements, and other land uses and authorizations/designations in all three study areas. Your scoping report said that you would do this.

**Costs** – You need to fully evaluate, quantify and disclose ALL COSTS for:  
a) enforcing OHV laws and dealing with illegal riding in other areas.  
b) signing and education campaigns.

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Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 5 of 12):

- c) real estate acquisition
- d) mine acquisitions
- e) hazardous material contamination reviews of lands and mines to be acquired.
- f) cleaning up all contaminated lands acquired.
- g) relocating utility lines.
- h) closing Amboy road under alternate 3.
- i) lost renewal energy development opportunities.
- j) lost mineral development opportunities.
- k) mitigating the lost Johnson Valley OHV lands with replacement lands for wheeling.
- l) grazing rights acquisitions.

How can a good decision be made without knowing the costs associated with each alternative? The government does not have an open checkbook. You must clearly show (in dollars and cents) the costs and benefits for each option.

ALTERNATIVES

During the scoping period, the public suggested various alternative actions the USMC could consider, as well as suggested modifications to the currently proposed scoping alternatives.

You have failed to analyze a full range of reasonable alternatives because you have not looked at alternatives to:

- 1) **Repeal the three wilderness areas near the base (Cleghorn, Sheephole, Cadiz).** Why wasn't the repeal of wilderness studied as an alternative? Explain this to the public in the EIS. Why doesn't an alternative analyze the opening of National Park or wilderness land for Marine training? Isn't it true that Congress made them so Congress can take them away? That would open up lots of land east of the base for Marine training. General Patton used that ground for tank training back in WWII days. It was good enough for him. Marines would have to shut down Amboy Road for a few days, but I can live with that. Ask them to analyze opening Sheephole, Cadiz, Cleghorn and even more wilderness. Why can't the Marines use those? In the 1500 pages of "legislative history" section for that law.  
[http://www.wilderness.net/NVWPS/documents/legis/ativehistory/111\\_11\\_SH\\_0723\\_87.pdf](http://www.wilderness.net/NVWPS/documents/legis/ativehistory/111_11_SH_0723_87.pdf) At page 862 a BLM COMMENT to some allegation say, "Several wilderness amendments in the 1981 and 1982 period were intended to be a further refinement of preliminary BLM decisions. The changes referred to were based on new data, reconsideration of existing data, and a public opinion. The changes and alternatives were analyzed in a draft and final environmental impact statement, and represent about a 10 percent decrease in the area recommended suitable (from 2.1 to 1.9 million acres). For each WSA the Record of Decision gives the rationale for the change.....The largest area dropped was Sheephole/Cadiz (WSA 305) which had been impacted by World War II military maneuvers and lacked wilderness qualities. The subsequent environmental impact statement

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Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 6 of 12):

was neither protested or appealed." BLM NEVER RECOMMENDED THOSE AREAS AS WILDERNESS! THOSE AREAS SHOULD NEVER BEEN DESIGNATED IN THE FIRST PLACE! THEY NEED TO BE REPEALED NOW TO ALLOW FOR USMC TRAINING THERE!

- 2) Provide for "Non-Wilderness Training Corridors" through the wilderness areas. According to that link Mike sent, there was a ton of new wilderness areas created by California Desert Protection Act of 1994 - Public Law 103-433 (10/31/1994). <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?...derness%20Laws> There is a special provision in that law for the Cleghorn Lakes wilderness next to the base. See: <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?...D=0&C;ID=0&key=> (13) Certain lands in the California Desert Conservation Area, of the Bureau of Land Management, which comprise thirty-three thousand nine hundred and eighty acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness—Proposed", dated July 1993, and which shall be known as the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness. The Secretary may, pursuant to an application filed by the Department of Defense, grant a right-of-way for, and authorize construction of, a road within the area depicted as "nonwilderness road corridor" on such map. Has this road already been built for Marine training through the Cleghorn wilderness? If not, the Marines should build it now and train there. Even if they don't admit their mistake and repeal the wilderness designations, maybe congress can create more "nonwilderness corridors" in Cleghorn, Sheephole AND Cadiz Dunes to help the Marines better train east of the base? The EIS must consider this.
- 3) Only expand into the NORTH half of Johnson Valley. You studied an alternative (#2) that expanded into the east half of Johnson Valley. That one doesn't make much sense to me. The Marines should be more adaptable and able to accomplish all their training objectives north of Emerson Lake. Why can't the Marines leave the whole area in the south for us wheelers? Run that 3rd (southern) brigade from the base through the channel just south of Emerson Lake (north of Hartwell Hills, Los Padre and Blue Ribbon mines). Please see the attached map. The Marines would still get the necessary of training time. All 3 brigades would still be able to converge together at red map dot ("MEB objective") during their couple training exercises. This new alternative would only require Marines to expand into about 60,000 acres of Johnson Valley. It would leave over 120,000 acres for wheelers to continuing riding in. You must develop and fully study another alternative to consider this.

**ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS**

1) How much is it going to cost to buy 100+ private properties? At the public meetings, I was told that land acquisition cost alone would be about \$50 million for the smallest acquisition alternative. You FAQ document on-line also says that "Estimates will be developed for the various alternatives that will be studied in accord with NEPA, and this

Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 7 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 7 of 12):

number continues to be an accurate estimate." This has not been done and needs to be ASAP.

2) I just can't understand why you guys say the economic impacts are "less than significant." The expansion takes over 100 private properties, closes mines, reduces sales & tax revenue, results in some business going under. Lucerne Valley could become a ghost town if they lose \$1.5 million or -25% compared to baseline due to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Why is it "significant" in the EIS to take 154-714 desert tortoises but "less than significant" to take that many private properties, mines, businesses? People are endangered species too. Taking one private property or closing one business is definitely significant in my book.

3) How much is it going to cost to buy out the miners?

4) Why wouldn't the noise from the tanks, bombs, aircraft, and artillery be significant?

5) How did the EIS come up with just 300,000 visitors in Johnson Valley? You failed to recognize many other uses there.

6) How do the airlines feel about more restricted airspace over the desert?

7) Your 1500+ page EIS treatise was not written for clear public understanding and discourse. You are not in compliance with the NEPA law. Instead, your EIS was development specifically with the goal of baffling the public with complex, technical, rambling and redundant bureaucratic obfuscation and gobbledygook. Your use of acronyms and insider military jargon is atrocious. For one example, what do these significant impacts (from the Executive Summary section) mean? They are even more difficult to understand in the airspace section. Explain these (and all the impacts) in terms that the public can understand: "Minimal to moderate impacts on Victor airway and moderate to significant impacts on jet route IFR air traffic within or adjacent to new and modified SUA. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on routes used by general aviation VFR aircraft. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on public airports and instrument approach procedures within close proximity to SUA. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on private airfields within, beneath, or bordering SUA."

8) The EIS must study the location of OHV areas that can be expanded or created, to make up for acreage loss in Johnson Valley. The EIS must address and propose possible mitigation for the public values lost. If recreation use is simply displaced without providing alternative areas for use within the same travel parameters, then the EIS must address the costs to both BLM and local law enforcement agencies to deal with trespass and resource damage that would likely occur.

9) The EIS must study the possibility of BLM selling some surplus land and then use the income to buy land for wheeling.

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 8 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 8 of 12):**

10) For mitigation, the EIS must identify the possibility of Congress creating a \$10-20M/year (or more) appropriation for OHV land purchase, management of dual-use area, law enforcement, education and outreach programs to prevent illegal riding etc.

11) The EIS must include a full justification for the expansion. Much of the justification that the County and public have seen to-date in preliminary presentations involves the need for large units and large-scale ground maneuver training. The Department of the Navy should assess the warfare situations that may likely face Marines in the next 25 years and whether the more likely future scenarios will be similar to the current engagements of small units in semi-urban settings.

12) DEIS says the expansion will have no visual impacts to the residents of the area. The glaring lights of Baghdad City and newly installed beacons are already an impact, and they are on the existing base. New beacons and desert maneuvers will light up our dark skies even more, and this needs to be addressed.

13) There will also be lack of restriction from the airspace above our homes. Low flying helicopters are already terrible. The EIS must address this.

14) As far as the escalating noise is concerned, the EIS projects doubling ordnance activity including dropping bombs from aircraft. There is no mention of vibrations in the EIS. You must study and quantify: 1) broken windows miles from the explosions, 2) empty tortoise shells near the border, 3) an increase in anxiety levels among the neighbors.

15) Under Cultural Resources, the EIS does not mention the historic eligibility of Johnson Valley or other neighboring homestead communities, and the impact of the light, noise and vibration on them. The recent 150 mph wind dramatizes the likelihood of disruption of training schedules. Accuracy hitting the targets can be questioned with unpredictable high winds. The last bombardment right near the border with Johnson Valley makes this idea even scarier.

16) How will the taking of private land, grazing rights and mining claims be compensated for?

17) How is 29 Palms planning to deal with the liability risk at events?

18) What restrictions will be placed on people trying to hold events on this "dual use" land?

19) What will the BLM role be, if any, in permitting & managing events in the dual use area?

20) Illegal OHV use on private land will increase. What will 29 Palms and BLM do (if anything at all) to help curtail this activity?

**Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 9 of 12)**

**Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 9 of 12):**

21) Why can't some wilderness be opened for OHVs? If they just have to train in Johnson Valley, get rid of the wilderness but then open it for wheeling. Open 3 acres of wilderness to wheelers for every acre lost in Johnson Valley. There's already way too much wilderness. Hardly anyone goes there. They are not accessible. How many people hike, camp or ride horses in them? The EIS must develop mitigation of opening wilderness areas. Analyze the current wilderness use that would be lost, as well as the OHV use to be gained by opening them to wheeling.

22) Where can current OHV areas be expanded? There might be a way to expand Stoddard, Razor and others. 29 Palms and BLM need to study this.

23) Where can new OHV territory be created? A 3:1 ratio was suggested at BLM advisory committee meeting (3 new acres opened, for every acre closed). The law requires they look at mitigation. Where does the EIS talk about expanding or creating new areas for riding? If 150,000 acres are lost in Johnson Valley, the EIS should suggest congressional designation for 450,000 acres OHV area. Some ideas are: Expand Stoddard to south. Expand Razor to west. Designate Dumont Dunes, Dove Springs, Jawbone Canyon, Keysville, Spangler Hills, El Mirage, Glamis, Imperial Dunes etc. What other areas can be designated? What areas have been closed in the past that can now be re-opened? There are a million acres to consider nationwide. Lawmakers can pick 450,000 acres from that.

24) Please go east or don't expand at all.

25) Please address these comments in the next draft of the EIS.

26) Please add me to your mailing list for a copy of the Final EIS.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Sidderi  
39553 Hawthorne St  
Palmdale, CA 93551

Comment ID: N-18734 (Page 10 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18734 (Page 10 of 12):





### Cut the military's budget

*President Obama proposes \$400 billion in reductions*

**A**mong the many differences between Republicans' and President Obama's plans for reducing the federal deficit, the most glaring may be their respective approaches to Pentagon spending.

The Republican long-term deficit reduction plan views military spending as sacrosanct. While GOP lawmakers are willing to dismantle Medicare, most seem to view military spending and fiscal responsibility as a contradiction in terms.

In contrast, President Obama last week proposed \$400 billion in military cuts over 12 years. That's less than the \$1 trillion over 10 years recommended by the president's deficit reduction commission, but it's welcome recognition of the need to make military spending sustainable in the midst of an economic crisis that isn't going away any time soon. It also acknowledges what even many Pentagon leaders agree is the very real threat to national security posed by the nation's skyrocketing debt.

The president's proposal represents a welcome shift in Washington thinking on military spending. Since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the Pentagon has been swilling at the federal trough like a herd of tapeworm-infested pigs. Just about anything that military officials and industry lobbyists requested, lawmakers gave them as they chanted the "support our troops" mantra. When weapons or programs went over budget, as they invariably did, there were few, if any, questions. Even when weapons underperformed or were designed for a Cold War that no longer existed, lawmakers couldn't shove the taxpayer dollars fast enough.

Defense spending has nearly dou-

bled to \$553 billion since Sept. 11 — and that doesn't include the cost of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, which is expected to add at least another \$160 billion this year.

Defense Secretary Robert Gates understands the need to restrain spending, although it's unclear if he agrees with the scope of Obama's proposed cuts. Earlier this year Gates proposed finding \$175 billion in defense savings over the next five years. He has eliminated several costly and unneeded weapons programs. He has ratcheted up pressure and oversight on contractors and has required the services to find ways to reduce spending. The defense secretary even has proposed the first increase in health insurance premiums in 16 years for working age military retirees.

There is room in the bloated Pentagon budget for cuts well above those sought by Gates and Obama. Skeptics should consider that the United States accounts for nearly as much military spending as the rest of the nations of the world put together.

There are signs that Republicans are beginning to understand the need to cut defense spending. It's encouraging that 110 House Republicans joined Democrats to support Gates' call to cut future spending for a redundant alternative engine for the F-35 fighter jet, saving between \$2 billion to \$3 billion. In the Senate, Oklahoma Republican Tom Coburn has criticized the military for a lack of budgetary transparency and has warned of steep cuts.

It's a start, but there is more to be done in reducing military spending to a fiscally reasonable and sustainable level that ensures the military can meet national security challenges without undermining the economy.

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Comment ID: N-18735  
Date Received: May 31, 2011  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Cc: Mr. Chris Proudfoot, MAGTFTC  
Re: Proposed Expansion of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base  
May 24, 2011

To Whom It May Concern —

First, I would like to commend the MCAGCC and the authors of the thorough and highly-detailed Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that they have presented for public review. The report is very comprehensive, and the effort in creating it and candor it represents is very much appreciated.

Having reviewed the document, I would like to register some concerns regarding the proposed expansion plans.

Arguably one of the most significant and immediate effects of training at the Base upon the surrounding area is the explosive vibration propagated throughout the Morongo Basin during live fire exercises. The larger ordnances (presumably artillery) can routinely make the ground shake *twenty to thirty miles away*— far beyond the confines of the Base proper. This is one of the most significant overall impacts on day-to-day living for residents of the region, as many such "hits" are subjectively reminiscent of a modest earthquake, and much more frequent.

The DEIS has attempted to account for these undesired externalities in Table 4.1-2, "Projected Ordnance Noise."

Notably, though, those estimates utilize *C-Weighted* measurements. Indeed, at relatively close distances to the ordnance (i.e., on-base), the resulting noise is more broad-spectrum; hence, this makes for a perfectly adequate measurement in that case.

However, at longer distances (i.e., in the numerous residential areas of the Basin), most of the vibration transmitted is very low frequency (much of it below 20 Hertz). At those frequencies, the "rolloff" utilized in the C-weighting curve dramatically underestimates the intensity of those shocks— by anywhere from approximately 10 to 25 decibels.

This is not your typical residential noise.

Further, because ordnance fire creates *impact* vibration (which is intermittent), rather than typical *ambient* noise, simply averaging the measurements over a 24-hour period (as per CNEL) further underestimates its net effect.

Indeed, these measurement biases are inevitably reflected in Table 4.1-2, as well as the report's conclusions, which are correspondingly minimizing in this regard.

Given the unique nature of the phenomenon being measured, the numbers as presented are actually quite deceiving; and thus, in this key regard, the DEIS falls short of conveying accurate ramifications to the surrounding population of the expansion of the MCAGCC.

Recommendations:

In order to mitigate the environmental impact, a key and common-sense goal of the expansion might be to shift heavy artillery fire further away from the more-populated western portion of the Morongo Basin, and for as much of the year as possible.

GEN-1

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18735 (Page 1 of 2):

GEN-1:

Thank you for your comment.

NOI-1:

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18735 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18735 (Page 2 of 2):

This could still be accomplished in the context of expanding the Base, and meeting its expanded operational needs.

For example, a land acquisition such as Alternative 6 might better meet all of these requirements if it incorporated modifications such as these:

- *West-to-East* direction of maneuver, similar to that in Alternative 4. This presumably shifts more of the heavy live fire toward a MEB Objective in the eastern (and less populated) end of the Basin.

- MEB Building Block training within *existing* Combat Center boundaries (also a la Alternative 4), as opposed to in the west study area. This is particularly important in view of the necessity of such training "up to 40 weeks/year" [see Table 2.3].

More than many other concerns addressed in the report, the effects of ordnance noise can arguably be felt (quite literally) far outside the confines of the Base. Thus, the changes proposed in the report could easily have a detrimental impact on the surrounding community, if not planned for carefully.

Given the conscientious tone of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and keeping the above considerations in mind, it should be possible to better balance the imperative for expansion of the Base with these externalities, and thus help preserve the quality of life for the majority of residents of the Morongo Basin, now and into the future.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS and the proposed expansion. I hope that this feedback proves of value to the planning process and the final report.

If you need any clarification to any of the foregoing, kindly do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Yours,



R. Diamond  
56925 Yucca Trail #320  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

NOI-1

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Response to Comment N-18736 (Page 1 of 20):

Comment ID: N-18736  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



May 24, 2011

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Fred Wiley

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil)

Re: *Comment Letter re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and  
Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base*

Dear Project Manager:

The Off-Road Business Association ("ORBA") is a trade organization whose members provide goods and services to the off-highway vehicle (OHV) market. On behalf of its members, and on behalf of the millions of OHV users throughout the western United States, ORBA reviews legislation and participates in administrative processes that have the potential to affect public access to recreational space, including and especially those areas controlled by the Bureau of Land Management. ORBA members have customers in virtually every state in the union, but the heart of the OHV market is located in southern California. The OHV industry, which pumps more than \$2 billion dollars into the state economy each year, cannot survive if public OHV areas are shut down or dedicated to non-public purposes.

Over the last decade, as interest in OHV recreation has increased, the desert and forest areas available for such recreation has diminished substantially, resulting in more users being herded on to smaller parcels of land. This causes user conflicts, natural resource impacts, safety problems, and a diminished wilderness experience. Now, OHV recreation faces its greatest threat to date – loss of the Johnson Valley OHV Area. Not only is Johnson Valley large and capable of supporting a large number and wide variety of recreational uses, it possesses some of the preeminent OHV venues in the entire world (e.g., "the Hammers"). Now, however, the United States Marine Corps, based on a "need" identified in the immediate aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, which to expand the Twenty-nine Palms military base to the west for "simultaneous, live-fire MEB training exercises." ORBA opposes this project for the following reasons:

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 May 23, 2011  
 Page 2

- The Marines have not demonstrated a clear need for the project. That is, the Marines have not identified a serious training deficiency or a mission failure that would be addressed by the project. Instead, the Marines have simply indicated that the proposed expansion project would improve their ability to “train as they fight.” This is insufficient, in light of the loss to the public in terms of recreational access and use.
- The Marines have not analyzed or disclosed the actual cost of the proposed project, which could run into the tens of millions of dollars. Given that defense spending has doubled since 9/11, and given that the U.S. Government can no longer meet its existing budget commitments and is drowning in debt, it is irresponsible for the Marines to propose yet another defense project with an open-ended – and undisclosed – price tag. The project is simply out of step with the belt-tightening program being advanced by experts within and outside the government.
- The proposed Project, by canceling all or most public use of the existing Johnson Valley OHV area, will greatly damage the local economy, leaving businesses no stable source of revenue. In addition, the loss of Johnson Valley will reverberate throughout the entire OHV industry, affecting businesses throughout southern California and beyond. These economic impacts can hardly be justified in the name of military necessity, as the Marines have not established one.
- The Environmental Impact Statement, which purports to assess and disclose the project’s effects on the human environment, is wholly inadequate to its purpose. In many cases, the Marines have based their impact analyses on antiquated data. In others, they have used analytical methods that cause impacts to be underreported. Indeed, much of the document does not satisfy NEPA’s “hard look” requirement.

NEPA-1

NEPA-2

SOC-1

NEPA-3

In the discussion set forth below, ORBA explains these four basic points in more detail.

I. THE MARINES HAVE NOT IDENTIFIED A CLEAR NEED FOR THE PROPOSED PROJECT

Although the training facilities currently available at Twenty-Nine Palms and other USMC bases have allowed the Marines to ably conduct military operations in Kuwait, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Department of the Navy has now decided that it needs to expand the Twenty-Nine Palms facility by more than 200,000 acres to provide for “sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs),

NEPA-4

Response to Comment N-18736 (Page 2 of 20):

**NEPA-1:** As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. The lack of a training site large enough to provide the required training of a MEB-sized Marine Air Ground Task Force is considered to be a “serious training deficiency” by the DoN and the Marine Corps.

**NEPA-2:** Consideration of effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National debt or deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**SOC-1:** As described in Sections 2.4 and 4.2 of the EIS, the “action alternatives” evaluated in the EIS would enable varying amounts of continued public access to all or sizeable portions of Johnson Valley for recreation. Section 4.3 of the EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives, and identifies a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Based on public comments on the DEIS, additional information and analysis of the socioeconomic impacts to the OHV industry have been added to the FEIS.

**NEPA-3:** As this comment appears to summarize a conclusion linked to specific comments offered as examples in Section IV of this letter, the response is deferred in favor of the point-by-point responses to each focused comment in Section IV below.

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 23, 2011  
Page 3

each consisting of three battalion task forces and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements.” (DEIS, ES-1) It is difficult to see how the recent wars in the Middle East, or any reasonably anticipated conflict elsewhere in the world, would require than an entire MEB be trained simultaneously at a single military installation.

NEPA-4

**II. THE MARINES HAVE NOT DISCLOSED OR JUSTIFIED COST OF THE PROJECT**

It is now clear that the greatest threat to the security of the United States is debt. Nevertheless, the Pentagon seems blind to this fact and continues to request billions of dollars in public money to fund projects that have only marginal military benefits. Despite the end of the Cold War and diminished threats from those countries with actual armies and navies, the United States continues to increase spending on weapons systems, force structures, and military installations. At long last, military experts and civilian decision-makers are beginning to question the strategic and tactical value of such an approach to defense procurements.

A few recent comments demonstrate the point:

- George Will (*Washington Post* – May 3, 2011):
  - “[T]he enormous military footprint in Afghanistan, next door to bin Laden’s Pakistan refuge, seems especially disproportionate in the wake of his elimination by a small cadre of specialists.”
  - Jim Lacey of the Marine Corps War College notes that Gen. David Petraeus has said there are perhaps about 100 al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan. “Did anyone,” Lacey asks, do the math? There are, he says, more than 140,000 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan, or 1,400 for every al-Qaida fighter. It costs about \$1 million a year to deploy and support every soldier – or up to \$140 billion, or close to \$1.5 billion a year, for each al-Qaida fighter. “In what universe do we find strategists to whom this makes sense?” he asked.”
- Mark Thompson (*Time* – “How To Save A Trillion Dollars” – April 25, 2011):
  - “The U.S. continues to field and maintain a global force designed during an era of sky’s-the-limit defense budgets.”
  - “Across Washington, all sorts of people are starting to ask the unthinkable questions about long-sacred military budgets. Can the U.S. really afford more than 500 bases at home and around the world? Do the Air Force, Navy and Marines really need \$400 billion in new jet fighters when their fleets of F-15s, F-

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**NEPA-4:** Comment noted. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

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- 16s and F-18s will give them vast air superiority for years to come? Does the Navy need 50 attack submarines when America's main enemy hides in caves?"
- "It may seem strange to talk about defense cuts while the U.S. is waging one war in Afghanistan, is mopping up a second in Iraq and has just launched a half-war in Libya. But those conflicts have made it easy to forget the warning of Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that 'the single biggest threat to our national security is our debt.' Which points to an almost tragic irony of Washington's \$700 billion annual appetite for military stores: we are borrowing cash from China to pay for weapons that we would presumably use against it. If the Chinese want to slay us, they don't need to attack us with their missiles. They just need to call in their loans."
  - "Numbers alone tell much of the story: We are now spending 50% more (even excluding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) than we did on 9/11. We are spending more on the military than we did during the Cold War, when U.S. and NATO troops stared across Germany's Fulda Gap at a real superpower foe with real tanks and thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at U.S. cities. In fact, the U.S. spends about as much on its military as the rest of the world combined."
  - "While the U.S.'s military spending has jumped from \$1,500 per capita in 1998 to \$2,700 in 2008, its NATO allies have been spending \$500 per person over the same span. As long as the U.S. is overspending on its defense, it lets its allies skimp on theirs and instead pour the savings into infrastructure, education and health care. So even as U.S. taxpayers fret about their health care costs, their tax dollars are paying for a military that is subsidizing the health care of their European allies."
  - "[R]evising America's defense budget will happen only if the U.S. takes a hard-eyed look at the dozens of military operations that are no longer vital or affordable."
  - "\$1 trillion in cuts wouldn't really be as drastic as it sounds – or as the military's no-surrender defenders insist. Such a trim would still leave the Pentagon fatter than it was before 9/11."
  - "California Representative Howard McKeon, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services Committee, says, 'A defense budget in decline portends an America in decline.' Attitudes like that can bankrupt a nation, and the public senses its."

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- o "For too long, an uninterested and distracted citizenry has been content to leave the messy business of national defense to those with bottom-line reasons for force-feeding it like foie gras goose. It's long past time . . . for U.S. taxpayers to demand that its government spend what is needed to defend the country – not a penny more."
- Robert Gates, United States Secretary of Defense
  - o "Given America's difficult economic circumstances and parlous fiscal condition, military spending on things large and small can and should expect closer, harsher scrutiny. The gusher has been turned off, and will stay off for a good period of time." (CNN, May 9, 2010)
  - o "The department must start setting priorities, making real trade-offs and separating appetites from real requirements." (Quoted in Huffington Post, August 9, 2010)
  - o "We are not exempt from scrutiny and being asked to figure out what we are doing with less dollars." (Quoted in MSNBC.com, January 6, 2011.)
  - o "The spigot of defense funding opened by 9/11 is closing."
  - o "It is important to remember that every defense dollar spent to over-ensure against a remote or diminishing risk — or in effect to run up the score in a capability where the United States is already dominant — is a dollar not available to take care of our people, reset the force, win the wars we are in and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable." (As quoted in Associated Press article, April 6, 2009).

These quotations demonstrate that well-informed commentators, military experts, and the Secretary of Defense himself believe it is time that the desires of the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy yield to the economic realities facing the United States. Only those programs, weapon systems, force structures, and facilities projects with an established, well-documented need should be funded. All others must either be revamped to better address an actual military deficiency or be abandoned. Ironically, it is the nation's unwillingness or inability to curb defense spending – which has *doubled* since September 11, 2001 – that has made the United States so debt-ridden and vulnerable.

With respect to the proposed base expansion at Twenty-Nine Palms, the Project documents, including the Draft EIS, are remarkable in that they fail to explain why the current facilities, however small when compared to what the Marines want, are inadequate to meet the

NEPA-5

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basic training needs of this branch of the military. Nowhere does the Marine Corp identify or describe any mission failure, large or small, that resulted from an inability to train an entire MEB simultaneously at the same site. In fact, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the expeditionary portion of the Marine's mission was carried out with great success.<sup>1</sup> It has been the long-term occupation of these countries, and the forced, constant exposure to IEDs and similar low-tech weapons, that has caused the majority of casualties. So while the Marines certainly *desire* a larger base and could probably make productive use of the extra space, there is no evidence that they *need* more land or that their combat readiness will suffer markedly without it.

NEPA-5

The Draft EIS and other documents also fail to mention how much the proposed Project will cost. While the land may be transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of the Navy for next to nothing, and while the ongoing costs of maintaining the site may not be prohibitive, the expense of conducting the full-MEB training twice a year could be huge, running to the tens of millions of dollars per annum. Again, no one can be sure how expensive this will be, because the Marines did not bother to calculate the cost (or if they did calculate it, they did not feel compelled to disclose the figures.) This is precisely the kind of budgetary arrogance that typifies military spending requests. Without accurate estimates regarding the cost of the proposed project, there is no means to weigh its purported benefits against its fiscal, environmental, and socio-economic impacts.

**III. THE PROJECT WILL DEVASTATE THE LOCAL ECONOMY AND SEVERELY DAMAGE THE OHV INDUSTRY**

Perhaps more than most organizations, ORBA is intimately familiar with the economic stress experienced by communities near Johnson Valley. These businesses rely heavily on the revenue generated by the OHV groups and individuals who visit the Johnson Valley OHV area. The proposed expansion of the USMC base, however, will effectively kill the local economy. As explained below, there is no way that the 70 additional military personnel added by the Project will spend enough to offset the loss of the OHV revenue currently generated in Johnson Valley.

SOC-2

In addition, the Project has the potential to wreak serious damage on the OHV industry in southern California and throughout the state. OHV-related businesses, many of which are small shops operating with razor-thin margins, have taken a huge hit since the economy collapsed in 2008; any additional loss of revenue could be fatal. The loss of Johnson Valley, will have repercussion well-beyond Lucerne Valley and Victorville; it will affect businesses in Los Angeles and Phoenix, among other places. While some OHV users, if closed out of Johnson Valley, will seek out other recreational venues (something that is increasingly difficult to find),

SOC-3

<sup>1</sup> The Draft EIS admits this fact on page J-23, stating, "Marine Corps successes in the first Gulf War in 1991, in leading the introduction of U.S. forces into Afghanistan in 2001, and again in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, have validated the Marine Corps' doctrinal training philosophy of live-fire combined arms MAGTF integration through CAX."

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**NEPA-5:** Sections 1.3, 1.4.3, 2.3, and 2.7 of the EIS explain why the current facilities (at the Combat Center as well as at other training sites) are inadequate to meet MEB training requirements. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. It is the role of decision-makers, including ultimately the U.S. Congress, to weigh the relative priority and importance of that training requirement along with other national defense priorities, financial concerns, the information in the EIS, and many other factors as they make decisions about the Proposed Action. Consideration of effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National debt or deficit are outside the scope of an EIS analysis.

**SOC-2:** Section 4.3 of the EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives, and identifies a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Based on public comments on the DEIS, additional information and analysis of the socioeconomic impacts to the OHV industry have been added to the FEIS.

**SOC-3:** While additional information about the broader OHV-related industry has been added to Sections 3.3 and 4.3 in the Final EIS, it should be noted that, as the size of the economy under consideration increases (e.g., the southern California region or the entire State), the impacts would represent a smaller and smaller proportion of the overall economy. The analysis acknowledges the potential impact on individual businesses in the project vicinity, and estimates the likelihood of OHV users seeking out other recreational venues.

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GEN-1: Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment GEN-1.

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many will simply decide that such an effort is too much trouble. They will stop bringing their families to the desert; they will sell their RVs and Jeeps and motorcycles, or let them mold in the garage. They will fall out of the market, and more of ORBA's members will go out of business. This seems a high price to pay for military exercises conducted just twice a year, the need for which has not been demonstrated.

SOC-3

IV. THE DRAFT EIS IS INADEQUATE

A. Failure to Provide Basic, Necessary Studies

Before identifying the specific defects of the EIS on a topic-by-topic basis, it is important first to examine a systemic flaw that plagues the entire EIS – the failure to provide the technical studies that purportedly support the document's impact analyses.

Data set forth in the EIS indicate that the proposed base expansion and the training activities contemplated on the newly-acquired land would adversely affect air quality, ambient sound/noise levels, biological resources, recreational activities, cultural resources, and socio-economic conditions. Other data from the EIS suggests that the project could also result in adverse impacts on hazardous materials, airspace management, water supply, water quality, and greenhouse gas emissions. As to each of these impact categories, the EIS concludes that the project's potential effects are either (a) not significant, or (b) significant and unavoidable. However, in most cases, the EIS fails to include the technical studies necessary to support such conclusions.

GEN-1

For example, the EIS fails to provide a water supply study, a water quality study, or an inventory of potential greenhouse gas sources and emissions. The EIS *does* provide a technical appendix for noise, but it is not a study *per se* of the project's potential impacts on the existing ambient environment. Instead, it is merely a primer on noise metrics – very helpful in terms of understanding noise measurements, but not helpful at all in terms of determining the actual noise impacts of the project.

The Biological Resource appendix is likewise deficient. It does not describe existing biological conditions on the affected site(s) or specifically identify where they exist. Nor does it explain how and to what extent biological resources will be affected by the project. Rather, the Biological Resource appendix simply describes the types of disturbances that currently occur on the Combat Center and in the proposed expansion areas, and then draws some conclusions regarding the project's potential impacts on the federally-listed desert tortoise. No other species is discussed. So this Biological Resource appendix cannot serve as the technical basis for the impact analysis set forth in the biology section of EIS. Even if the desert tortoise discussion was adequate (which it is not, see below), the absence of any assessment of project impacts on desert birds, mammals, other reptiles, sensitive plants, and wildlife movement, renders the document

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incomplete and defective. The EIS also refers to the 2007 Basewide Biological Opinion prepared by the USFWS (the 2007 BO), and contends that the conservation measures from this BO will effectively mitigate Project impacts on desert tortoise. As with other critical documents, however, the 2007 BO is not included in the EIS as an appendix, so there is no way for the public to review its contents or test the assertions made in the EIS.

GEN-1  
Continued

The Cultural Resource appendix is also of little value. It is merely a compendium of the various known artifacts and historical sites that exist in the areas being proposed for annexation to the base. Nowhere does the appendix actually evaluate the proposed Project's potential to damage or destroy these artifacts and/or historical sites. Therefore, it, too, is wholly inadequate and may not serve as the technical basis for the EIS's analysis of Project impacts on cultural resources.

NEPA-6

Finally, as indicated above, the EIS provides no data whatsoever as to the cost of the proposed Project, including costs associated with the MEB training operations to be conducted on the newly-acquired land.

**B. The EIS Fails to Analyze USMC Potential to Deplete Aquifers in Western Study Area**

On page 3.13-19, the EIS makes a startling disclosure: The Combat Center is running out of water and has no current means to augment its supply.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Combat Center obtains all of its water – potable and non-potable – through groundwater pumping. However, the aquifer that provides most of this water, Surprise Spring, is becoming dangerously depleted. In fact, the Marine's have so overdrafted the aquifer that groundwater levels have dropped by as much as 190 feet. (EIS, 3.13-19) Worse, Surprise Spring is an ancient aquifer that does not recharge readily, which means that it "is not a renewable resource." (EIS, 3.13-19) In short, the Combat Center's primary source of water is rapidly disappearing and the Marines desperately need to find another one.<sup>3</sup>

WAT-1

The Western Study Area ("WSA"), by contrast, overlies a different groundwater subbasin – one with a substantial supply of water. (EIS, 3.13-20; Table 3.13-5) It would appear, then, that the Marine Corps, apart from wanting the WSA for military training operations, may also be looking to acquire access to the groundwater resources beneath it. Although the groundwater

<sup>2</sup> The EIS attempts to downplay this problem by claiming that conservation efforts at the Combat Center have reduced water consumption by 26% over the last decade. However, despite these reductions in consumption, the Combat Center still overdrafts the Surprise Spring aquifer by 2,900 acre feet (AF) per year, and overdrafts the Twentynine Palms Valley aquifer by 1,040 AF per year. (Table 3.13-5).

<sup>3</sup> The Combat Center also draws groundwater from the Twentynine Palms Valley subbasin, which is also depleted and functions at a recharge deficit. (Table 3.13-5)

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**NEPA-6:** The proposed action and alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Although the No-Action Alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action, it has been carried forward for analysis in the EIS as described in Chapter 4 under each resource area. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**WAT-1:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment WAT-1.

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from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers is high in Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), it can either be treated for potable uses, or “blended” with higher-quality water for a variety of potable and non-potable uses. The EIS never acknowledges that the Marines plan to use WSA groundwater to supplement existing supplies. Indeed, the EIS does not even discuss this very plausible scenario, and for this reason alone is defective. Nevertheless, the EIS does mention that the Marines are “evaluating plans to “blend” groundwater from the Surprise Spring subbasin with those [sic] from another aquifer(s).” (EIS, 3.13-19) These blending scenarios were apparently modeled by the USGS in 2008. However, the details of this modeling effort are not provided.

WAT-1  
continued

The water resource data provided in the EIS, while cryptic, suggest strongly that the Marine Corps, once it secures possession of the WSA, will begin pumping groundwater from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers to blend with water derived from Surprise Spring. The EIS, however, fails to assess whether and to what extent this effort to temporarily address the Combat Center’s water shortage will deplete the aquifers in Johnson Valley and Means Valley. In fact, the EIS does not even disclose how much water the proposed Project will require. As a result, the EIS is deficient as a matter of law.

In short, the Combat Center’s undisclosed desire to acquire the water beneath the WSA reminds one of the following dialogue from the movie *Chinatown*:

Noah Cross: “You see Mr. Gittes. Either you bring the water to L.A. – or your bring L.A. to the water.”

Jake Gittes: “How do you do that?”

Noah Cross: “—just incorporate the Valley into the city so the water goes to L.A. after all. It’s very simple.”

— *Chinatown* (Screenplay by Robert Townes)

**C. The EIS Noise Analysis is Inadequate**

As indicated above, the EIS does not actually provide a Noise Study as a technical appendix. Instead, Appendix H is simply a primer on noise modeling and does not provide any data on the existing sound environment or the Project’s impact on that environment. Likewise, the EIS itself fails to describe ambient sound levels in and adjacent to the three study areas – i.e., the WSA, the Eastern Study Area (“ESA”), or the Southern Study Area (“SSA”). Without existing sound level data, there is no way to measure the extent to which the Project will alter the

NOI-1

**NOI-1:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment NOI-1.

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current sound environment. Nor is there any way to determine whether the Project's net impact on noise is significant.

Even the baseline used for "existing" noise conditions at the *Combat Center* defies logic. Rather than measure *current* aircraft noise (i.e., from 2008 or 2009), the EIS uses a 2003 noise study – WR 02-13 – that is based on airfield operations that took place in 2001. Not only is such information 10 years old, it fails to account for the significant increase in flight operations that has occurred since the "War on Terror" began. It appears that the Marines, in an effort to trim costs and/or save time, simply pulled an old noise study off the shelf rather than perform a new one. NEPA does not permit this kind of sloppy work, especially since there is nothing preventing the Marines from conducting a fully updated noise study at the Combat Center. There is also no explanation for altering the noise model to reflect "annual average daily operations" instead of "annual average *busy* day operations." (See, EIS, 3.9-4) This change results in an underreporting of potential noise effects.

The EIS noise analysis also uses the wrong metric for determining the significance of project-related noise events. For example, the MEB training contemplated by the proposed Project entails low-altitude strafing and bombing runs by fixed and non-fixed wing aircraft.<sup>4</sup> Flight operations such as these create high-intensity noise of very short duration, resulting in substantial annoyance to any person living or working nearby. Rather than assess this impact using the Lmax noise metric, which is specifically designed to measure impulsive sound, the EIS uses the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) metric, which averages noise levels over a certain period of time, usually 24 hours. Obviously, this metric will not fully capture the noise (and annoyance) that results from very intense but sporadic noise events caused by military jet flyovers. To make matters worse, it does not appear that the EIS measured aircraft noise while in combat mode – i.e., flying fast and at low altitude.<sup>5</sup> Instead, the EIS aircraft noise model was based on two aerial *refueling* tracks – one at 19,000 feet AGL and one at 22,000 AGL. (EIS, 3.9-6)<sup>6</sup> Again, this kind of modeling decision results in an underreporting of aircraft noise impacts.

We would point out that using the CNEL metric *does* makes sense when determining noise impacts near the Combat Center airports, where the number of flight operations is high enough to warrant time-averaging. It just doesn't make sense when determining noise impacts in those areas affected by combat training flights.

<sup>4</sup> According to the EIS, combat training flights will be conducted at altitudes as low as 500 feet above ground level (AGL). (EIS, 3.7-9)

<sup>5</sup> The EIS admits that, with the Project, "[o]verflights would increase within existing and proposed airspace and could operate at lower altitudes than currently allowed in specified areas. (EIS, 4.1-5). However, the EIS does not measure the noise impacts of such overflights.

<sup>6</sup> Unlike refueling operations, bombing and strafing runs occur at very low altitudes.

NOI-1 continued

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In addition, the EIS fails to analyze adequately the effect of project-related noise on wildlife. The EIS's discussion on this topic is remarkably brief and general, even though military operations such as artillery firing, ordnance explosions, combat flights, and tank and troop movements generate the kind of high-intensity noise that frightens wildlife and may disrupt their normal behaviors. For example, according to Figure 3.1-8 of the EIS, the Noise Study included only two (2) "points of interest" located within the WSA. This demonstrates that the Noise Study was focused exclusively on impacts to humans, ignoring entirely the Project's potentially devastating noise effects on animals in the desert.<sup>7</sup> Birds, reptiles, ungulates (and other mammals) all are highly-sensitive to sound changes. Given the number of wildlife species in the proposed acquisitions areas (especially the WSA) – including the federally-threatened desert tortoise – the EIS should provide a more thorough and searching analysis of the Project's potential to cause noise-related impacts on biological resources.

BIO-1

**BIO-1:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment BIO-1.

**D. The EIS's Biological Impacts Analysis is Inadequate**

Available data from the BLM and other sources show that the WSA is home to a wide array of sensitive plant and wildlife species, including the desert tortoises. Yet the EIS does not indicate where these species are located within the WSA; nor does it overlay the proposed military training exercises onto species maps to determine where potential conflicts might arise. Without such overlays, it is impossible for the public (and the Marine Corps) to know with any kind of precision whether the proposed MEB training activities will kill, injure, disrupt, or displace sensitive plants and animals. This is not a speculative concern. The Marine Corps, during the planned MEB exercises, intends to activate 15,000 to 20,000 troops, backed by tanks and other vehicles, and engage in live-fire combat training. This will involve hundreds of thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition, artillery rounds, tank rounds, and missiles delivered from aircraft. The exercise areas will effectively be transformed into highly-violent war zones. In such a situation, there is no question that existing wildlife will be killed or injured or, at the very least, displaced. However, the EIS provides very little information on this subject.

BIO-2

**BIO-2:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment BIO-2.

Perhaps the Marine Corps is assuming the Section 7 Biological Opinion will cover these issues. If so, the assumption is unfounded. First, the Biological Opinion, when completed, will only address potential impacts on federally-listed species – i.e., the desert tortoise. No other species will be covered. Second, the Biological Opinion is required under the Endangered Species Act; it does not satisfy the Marine Corps' separate and independent obligation under NEPA to disclose impacts to biological resources.

Part of the problem is that the Marines, in preparing the EIS, conducted very few wildlife studies of the 180,000-acre WSA. According to Table 3.10-1 of the EIS, the Marines performed the following biological resource surveys in the WSA: (1) one survey for special status plants in

<sup>7</sup> See, EIS at 3.9-1 [Describing noise metrics as measuring sound in relation to human sensitivities.]

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2008, (2) one survey for reptiles and burrowing owl in 2008, and (3) one survey for Mojave ground squirrel in 2008. No bird surveys (other than for burrowing owl) were conducted. No mammal surveys (other than for Mojave ground squirrel) were conducted. There was no attempt to identify and locate bat roosts. Insects were not surveyed at all. As a result, the EIS does not provide a complete or reliable inventory of the various plant and wildlife species that exist in the WSA, even though the BLM possesses much of this information.<sup>8</sup>

The EIS also fails to discuss the potential for lead and other chemicals from expended ordnance to enter the water supply used by wildlife or to accumulate in the plant materials eaten by wildlife.

Another shortcoming of the EIS biological impacts analysis is that it tends to focus myopically on the desert tortoise and pays scant attention to the other sensitive species in the affected areas. This is not to say that impacts on the tortoise are unimportant. On the contrary, they are critically important, and this Project has the potential to “take” hundreds of tortoises annually, possibly frustrating the fragile state of the species recovery. However, the tortoise is *not* an umbrella species for all or even most of the other wildlife in the study areas. Therefore, the EIS must give a full accounting of potential impacts on all sensitive birds, mammals (including bats), reptiles, amphibians, and insects that use or reside in these parts of the Mojave Desert.

With respect to Project impacts on the desert tortoise, the EIS has major baseline data problems. In recent years, tortoise experts and statisticians have realized that survey methods used in the 1980s and 1990s, including the manner in which transects were run, produced unreliable results. In fact, data from surveys conducted prior to 2005 are largely unusable; and they certainly cannot be mixed with or compared to data from surveys conducted from 2005 onward. However, this is exactly the error that the EIS makes in its tortoise analysis. For tortoise densities on the *Combat Center*, the EIS relies on strip transect surveys conducted in 1997 and 1999. (EIS, 3.10-24) For tortoise densities in the *WSA*, the EIS relies on tortoise sign surveys conducted in 2009. (EIS, 3.10-41) The EIS then tries to compare these two data sets, which any tortoise expert knows is a dubious exercise.

<sup>8</sup> Although Figure 3.10-5 of the EIS purports to depict the vegetation communities of the West, East, and South studies areas, the vegetative mapping for the WSA so coarse as to be worthless. The EIS itself admits that “[u]nlike the Combat Center and the other two acquisition study areas, plant communities have not been mapped to a high level of detail within the entirety of the west study area.” (EIS, 3.10-34) In fact, only 57% of the WSA has been subjected to high-quality mapping. With respect to where in the WSA certain wildlife species reside, Table 3.10-7 provides only the most general information. For example, when discussing the desert tortoise, the table indicates that the species “[o]ccurs in suitable habitat throughout the west study area.” As to the Mojave fringe-toad lizard, the table states that this species “[o]ccurs in the southern portion of the west study area.” For purposes of determining whether the military activities contemplated under the proposed Project will affect these species and their habitat, such vague statements have almost no value.

BIO-2 continued

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About the only meaningful conclusion to be drawn from the tortoise data derived from surveys of the Combat Center is that base operations have resulted in significant reductions in tortoise density, at least compared to similar habitat areas adjacent to the base – e.g., those in WSA. In light of this, the proposed Project, if implemented in the WSA, may cause similar tortoise declines in the expansion area. The EIS does not really tackle this issue. Instead, it suggests that there will be no net change in threats to the tortoise, since the Project would displace existing OHV activities. However, this is an oversimplified and inaccurate analysis. There is no data indicating that OHV use in the WSA (Johnson Valley) has resulted in perceptible declines in tortoise populations. In fact, tortoise densities in Johnson Valley have been and remain significantly higher than tortoise densities on the Combat Center (allowing, of course, for discrepancies in the survey methods and data).

BIO-2  
continued

Finally, on the matter of the Project’s anticipated “take” of tortoises, the EIS states that under Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative), the Project, over its 50-year life, would result in the take of between 154 and 714 tortoises at the base. (Table 4.10-10)<sup>9</sup> This is quite a large range. Although the Biological Opinion for this Project has not yet been released, it would be unusual for the USFWS to issue an Incidental Take Statement (“ITS”) where the “take” range is so wide. The Marines must conduct a more thorough study of potential “take” to predict with greater precision that actual number of tortoise that will be lost as a result of the Project. Without such a thorough study, the EIS is inadequate. Further, without a more exact range of potential take, the USFWS will not be able to issue a Biological Opinion and ITS that comply with Section 7 of the ESA. We would also point out that any project with the potential to “take” more than 14 federally-listed desert tortoises per year cannot be described as having no significant effects on biological resources.<sup>10</sup> In addition, nothing in the EIS indicates that the proposed mitigation measures, including those to be developed and included in the not-yet-released Biological Opinion, will reduce the number of tortoises “taken” as a result of the Project.

**E. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project Impacts on Recreation**

The EIS concludes correctly that the proposed Project, if implemented in the WSA, will have a significant effect on outdoor recreation. However, on the issue of recreation impacts, the EIS makes certain erroneous assumptions that result in a skewed assessment of project alternatives. Specifically, the EIS assumes that the number of “dispersed use” visitor days lost under Alternative 6 (the “Preferred Project”) will be the same as the number lost under Alternatives 4 and 5. (EIS, Table 4.2-4) This is almost certainly incorrect, given that under Alternative 6 only 44% of the Johnson Valley OHV area would be available for part-time public

REC-1

**REC-1:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment REC-1.

<sup>9</sup> These figures include “take” of tortoises in the Combat Center as well as the proposed acquisition areas. (See Table 4.10-10)

<sup>10</sup> The Alternative 6 take figures set forth in Table 4.10-10 amortize to an estimated take of between 3.08 and 14.28 tortoises *per year*.

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use (through the proposed Restricted Public Access program), whereas under Alternatives 4 and 5 the entire Johnson Valley OHV area (100%) would be available for part-time public use. The difference is not inconsequential, as it amounts to more than 106,000 acres of land. Given that "dispersed use" means exactly that – *dispersed use* – it is irrational to assume that the 82,802 acres available for public use under Alternative 6 will accommodate the same number of visitors as the 189,470 acres available for public use under Alternatives 4 and 5. The more reasonable assumption is that a significant percentage of potential visitors will bypass Johnson Valley rather than be crowded into the small area provided under the RPAA for Alternative 6.

It is critical that this analytical error be corrected, because it infects the EIS's assessment of the project's impacts on (1) recreational use displacement, and (2) socio-economic conditions. This is easily explained. If fewer OHV users visit Johnson Valley under Alternative 6 than under Alternative 4 or 5, those users will likely travel to some other OHV venue, taking their dollars with them. The EIS, therefore, must evaluate this "displacement" scenario for impacts on natural resources at the "substitute" venue(s) and for the economic loss suffered by local businesses near Johnson Valley. Note also that the EIS's discussion of recreational displacement impacts generally is very poor, even though data included in the EIS indicate that the proposed Project will contribute to the 30-year trend of reducing the space available for OHV-related recreation. (See Figure 3.2-6) During that period, acreage available for OHV recreation decreased by 48%; the proposed Project would effectively close the Johnson Valley OHV area, removing another 180,000 acres from public recreational use. The loss of so much recreational land simply shunts more people and more vehicles onto the few open areas that remain, placing added stress on their human and environmental resources, and effectively ruining the "wilderness experience" of those seeking an escape from urban life. These secondary impacts of the Project are real and the EIS must analyze them in detail. Currently, however, it fails to do so.

REC-1  
continued

The EIS also provides little assurance that the Marine Corps will not arbitrarily close the RPAA area contemplated under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6. Nothing in the EIS or the Project generally indicates that this would not or could not happen. On the contrary, the EIS does not even describe the conditions under which such a closure would be allowed. Instead, the decision to close the RPAA appears to rest solely with the Marine Corps, with no right to appeal. In light of this fact, the EIS should (but does not) disclose that the Project's recreation impacts under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6 may ultimately be identical to those of Alternative 1.

GEN-2

**GEN-2:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment GEN-2.

**F. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The EIS includes a greenhouse gas (GHG) discussion (as part of the Cumulative Impacts analysis), but does not present a meaningful assessment of the project's GHG impacts. First, the EIS fails to provide a GHG inventory for the Combat Center, so there is no means to determine the base's *existing* carbon footprint or to calculate how much that footprint will grow once the

AQ-2

**AQ-2:** Please see the response to comment N-18713, AQ-1.

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Project is implemented. This kind of “project-to-ground” analysis is central to every NEPA analysis. Second, the EIS, for purposes of determining impact significance, compares the Project’s GHG emissions against the total GHG inventory of *the entire United States*. Not surprisingly, the Project’s contribution to the national total is very small, amounting to .00014%. Based on this number, the EIS concludes that the Project will have an insignificant impact on global climate change. (EIS, 5-33) Such an analysis is meaningless and unhelpful. No conceivable project – no matter how much GHG it might generate – will contribute more than a fraction of a percent to the national inventory of GHG emissions. Using the EIS’s logic, then, no project would ever make a significant contribution to global climate change. For this reason, the significance criterion used in the EIS is invalid.

AQ-2  
continued

Regardless of whether the EPA or any other federal agency has established significance thresholds for GHG emissions, the Marine Corps can and must develop significance criteria that are meaningful for this EIS. Ironically, the proposed project is located in the one state in the Union that has developed standards for evaluating GHG emissions on a project-by-project basis. The Marines should take advantage of this and use California’s standards for determining the significance of the Project’s GHG emissions. In fact, given that the Marines have asked for – and received – permission from the Mojave Air Pollution Control District to be included in the District’s portion of the California State Implementation Plan, GHG emissions from the Combat Center and the proposed Project should be assessed using California’s standards.

**G. The EIS Provides a Skewed Assessment of the Project’s Adverse Impacts on the Local Economy**

The EIS contends that the Project will add 70 personnel to the existing population at the Combat Center, and that these 70 individuals will generate, collectively, \$4.5 million in county-wide spending, thus off-setting the economic losses caused by shutting down the Johnson Valley OHV area. This claim is hard to square with the fact that, according to the EIS, Johnson Valley OHV area experiences approximately 300,000 visitor days per year. (See, EIS, Table 3.2-9)<sup>11</sup> For the EIS’s claim to be valid, each visitor would have to spend less than \$15 per day. This contradicts Table 3.3-8 of the EIS, which indicates that the average person spends more than \$31.00 per visitor use day.

SOC-4

**SOC-4:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment SOC-1.

The \$4.5 million attributed to new base employee spending, while not inconsequential, cannot compete with the \$338.8 million (in 2003 dollars) generated by recreational visitation, including OHV-related recreation, in the Mojave Desert Region. (See EIS Table 3.3-7, citing Economic Benefits study conducted by California Department of Parks and Recreation.)

<sup>11</sup> We believe the 300,000 annual visitor use day figure used is low by a factor of at least two. The figure is comes from the BLM, which historically underreports visitor numbers. Further, as pointed out in the EIS, Johnson Valley has a number of entry and exit points, most of which are not monitored by BLM. As a result, many visitors are never counted and the durations of their visits are not determined.

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More important, however, is the fact that the Project will have a disproportionate and devastating economic impact on those communities closest to, and most dependent on, the Johnson Valley OHV area – e.g., Lucerne Valley. (See, Table 4.3-13)<sup>12</sup> The EIS speculates that these businesses will be able to make up the difference by serving non-OHV visitors on their way to Big Bear Lake. (EIS, 4.3-9) However, there is no evidence to support this contention. The EIS also argues that because Lucerne Valley has historically experienced a 20% turnover rate in its businesses, the community is accustomed to economic fluctuations and will adjust to the new reality occasioned by the project. (EIS, 4.3-9) Based on this rather flip analysis, the EIS concludes that the Project will not have a significant impact on Lucerne Valley or other local economies. Such a conclusion reflects both insensitivity to and ignorance of the economic realities facing the business owners (and employees) of Lucerne Valley and the other towns that rely on OHV-related revenues.

SOC-4  
continued

**H. The EIS Does Not Analyze Project Impacts on Regional OHV Market**

Although the EIS makes a half-hearted (and misleading) attempt to evaluate the Project's potential impact on the local economy, it ignores complete the Project's effects on the regional OHV market, which has suffered substantially since the economic downturn in 2008. The loss of Johnson Valley may and likely will cause a reduction in OHV-related sales throughout southern California. This, in turn, may result in business failures among those manufacturers, distributors, and retailers that serve the OHV market. This impact should have been analyzed in the EIS but was not.

SOC-5

**I. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Water Quality**

As shown in Figure 3.13-1 of the EIS, the WSA is laced with washes, rivulets, and dry lake beds that receive and/or convey water during rain events. In addition, much of the WSA overlies groundwater aquifers. These water sources are critical to the vegetation and wildlife in the WSA. The EIS, however, does not describe the existing water quality conditions at these water sources. Nor does it provide anything more than a superficial analysis of the proposed Project's potential to contaminate these water sources with munitions constituents (MC) and hydrocarbons from fuel discharges.

WAT-2

<sup>12</sup> According to Table 4.3-13, the Project, under Alternative 6 (the Preferred Project), would reduce recreational and film spending in the local community by 24.6% and local tax revenues by 24.7%. Given the small profit margins of most small businesses, this kind of drop in revenues would be devastating.

**SOC-5:** Additional information and analysis regarding potential impacts to the regional OHV industry were added for the Final EIS.

**WAT-2:** Section 3.13.1 of the EIS states that all naturally-occurring surface water features are ephemeral and contain water only during and after infrequent rain events. The EIS also states that no information is available on existing water quality conditions associated with intermittent wet areas (washes and playas) at the Combat Center. It is likely that water quality for intermittent flows is influenced by the amounts of suspended sediment and/or dissolved salts, which are expected to vary for different substrate types, such as bedrock, alluvial fans, and playa surfaces. The potential for munitions contaminants to affect the quality of surface and groundwaters are evaluated in Section 4.13. The low precipitation rate, intermittent receiving surface water bodies, and deep groundwater, limit the potential migration of MC residues and thus the impact of munitions on water quality was determined to be less than significant. No changes to the EIS are required.

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**J. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Air Quality**

a. Baseline Emissions.

The method used to perform the Air Quality impacts analysis is highly-suspect. For example, when establishing baseline pollutant levels (including those for PM<sub>10</sub>), the EIS uses emissions levels from the Combat Center as measured in 2002, even though emissions data from 2009 are available. Of course, the 2009 emissions are substantially higher. The EIS discounts these, however, claiming that "the high levels of existing training exercises at the Combat Center would revert back to pre-war levels (before 2003)." (EIS, 4.8-2) There is no evidence offered in support of this assumption; and for purposes of NEPA, baseline conditions are those which exist at the time the EIS is being prepared, not those that existed at some arbitrary point in the past.

AQ-3

**AQ-3:** Please see the response to comment letter N-18713, comment AQ-2.

b. Ozone.

The EIS acknowledges that the proposed Project will generate ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) in quantities that exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), thereby requiring that the Marines subject the Project to a "conformity analysis." (EIS, 4.8-6) In this case, however, the Marines did not perform a conformity analysis at all. Instead, they requested that the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District ("MDAQMD") and the California Air Resources Board ("CARB") "include these emissions from Alternative 6 into the next O<sub>3</sub> SIP revision for the MDAB (MDAQMD 2010a and ARB 2011)." (*Ibid.*)<sup>13</sup> According to the EIS, this will ensure that Alternative 6 conforms to the SIP, thereby eliminating the "significance" of the Project's ozone impacts.

AQ-4

**AQ-4:** Please see the response to comment letter N-18713, comment AQ-3.

There are two problems with this analysis. First, it was "pre-decisional" and therefore unlawful for the Marines to request that the MDAQMD and/cr CARB include the ozone emissions from Alternative 6 (or any alternative) in the revised SIP. By making such a request, the Marines have signaled that they intend to adopt Alternative 6, regardless of the NEPA process. In other words, the current NEPA process is a sham and a charade. The die is already cast and the Marines will not be diverted from Alternative 6, no matter what the environmental analysis might show.

Second, any SIP revision – including the one requested by the Marines for this Project – must be approved by the U.S. EPA; and there is no evidence that this has occurred. Note, too, that EPA approval, especially with respect to local changes to SIPs, is never guaranteed. As the Imperial County Air Quality District recently discovered, EPA is more than willing to disapprove any portion of a SIP revision with which it disagrees. In light of these

<sup>13</sup> See also EIS, 4.8-18.

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facts, it is incorrect to assume that the Project – i.e., Alternative 6 – conforms to the SIP for ozone.

AQ-4

3. Particulate Matter

The EIS also acknowledges that the Project will generate more PM<sub>10</sub> than the NAAQS allow. (EIS, 4.8-6; 4.8-18) To address this impact, the EIS purports to conduct a conformity analysis pursuant to MDAQMD Rule 2202(H)(1)(d)(i). (EIS, 4.8-18) In this analysis, the EIS concludes that, under Project conditions, PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations at the boundary separating the WSA and the Combat Center would be 97 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. When these emissions are added to background concentrations of 52 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, the cumulative total concentration of PM<sub>10</sub> is 149 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, just under the 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> NAAQS of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

What makes this conclusion dubious, however, is that the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, while measured at the WSA boundary, do not actually occur at that location or reach their highest concentration there. According to the EIS, emissions will be highest during the so-called "Final Exercise," which will take place "in close proximity to the boundary of the Combat Center." (EIS, 4.8-19) The EIS does not define "close proximity," but it is safe to assume that it means the exercise will not take place on the boundary itself, which is where the air quality model makes its measurements. Because PM<sub>10</sub> disperses quickly over distance, the actual emissions generated by the Final Exercise will not be fully captured if measured or modeled at the WSA/Combat Center boundary line.<sup>14</sup> As a result, the PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations described in the EIS are underreported. This, of course, directly affects the conformity determination, because if the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> emissions were measured/ modeled at the source – i.e., at the Final Exercise ground location – rather than at the WSA/Combat Center boundary, total PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations would surely exceed the NAAQS threshold of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the EIS conclusion regarding the "insignificance" of the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> is in error.

AQ-5

Then there is the matter of dust and PM<sub>10</sub> impacts on biological resources, especially the desert tortoise. As acknowledged in the EIS, the desert tortoises in the Mojave are susceptible to upper respiratory tract disease (URTD), which can be fatal. The EIS, however, fails to assess the extent to which dust and PM<sub>10</sub> from the Project could make tortoises more vulnerable to URTD or other diseases. In addition, the EIS includes data demonstrating that project-related dust could substantially disrupt photosynthesis of desert plants, thus reducing their productivity. (EIS, 4.10-5) What the EIS fails to evaluate, however, is whether the dust impacts on plant productivity will have secondary adverse effects on available forage and shelter for desert tortoises. This issue must be addressed in the Final EIS.

AQ-5: Please see the response to comment letter N-18713, comment AQ-4.

<sup>14</sup> The EIS itself admits that "PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations quickly decrease with distance from the Combat Center boundary." (EIS, 4.8-20)

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**K. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Discussion of the No-Action Alternative**

The EIS fails to provide an adequate description of the No-Action Alternative; nor does it explain why the No-Action Alternative would frustrate the basic mission of the Marines. In fact, the EIS is largely dismissive of this alternative, even though NEPA requires that it be analyzed and considered. Worse, because the EIS does not provide a clear description of the No-Action Alternative and its effects, it is difficult to compare the other alternatives to it. Finally, the EIS should explore the possibility of improving MEB training within the confines of the No-Action Alternative. For reasons not explained in the document, this concept was not analyzed in the EIS. Note that this analysis must include a cost-benefit component.

NEPA-7

**L. The EIS Fails to Recommend Feasible Mitigation Measures to Offset Significant Impacts; EIS Findings of “Infeasibility” are Not Supported by Sufficient Evidence**

The EIS identifies a multitude of significant impacts that will result from the proposed Project. Only in the rarest of cases, however, does the EIS recommend mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those impacts. In all other instances (and most notably in the discussion of impacts to OHV recreation), the EIS simply concludes, without evidence or analysis, that the Marine Corps could not identify feasible mitigation measures and therefore does not intend to implement any. NEPA does not allow federal agencies, even the military, to sidestep their mitigation obligations so easily. For each significant impact of the proposed Project, the Marines must develop mitigation measures or demonstrate – with evidence – that such measures cannot be reasonable undertaken. The Draft EIS, as currently written, does not meet this standard.

NEPA-8

With respect to the Project significant effects on OHV recreation, the EIS cannot credibly argue that no feasible mitigation measures exist to offset these impacts. On the contrary, mitigation for such impacts is not only feasible, it’s easy: The Marines can simply provide money to BLM and/or the OHV Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation (“DPR”) to purchase land near Johnson Valley for use as an OHV recreation area. Not only is the western Mojave Desert dotted with private in-holdings that could be acquired for this purpose, the OHV Division of State Parks has an actual program for purchasing such properties and turning them into OHV parks. So the EIS is incorrect in stating that there is no feasible means to mitigate the Project’s impacts on recreation.

**M. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Description of the Project**

The EIS does not quantify the extent to which the proposed Project will increase military training operations when compared to existing conditions. That is, the EIS fails to calculate and disclose the net increase in flight operations, tank miles traveled, troop exercises, ordnance

NEPA-9

**NEPA-7:** The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**NEPA-8:** In accordance with NEPA, the EIS discloses and analyzes the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives under each resource area, as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS.

**NEPA-9:** Please refer to response to comment letter N-18713, comment NEPA-7.

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expended, etc. resulting from the proposed Project. For this reason, it is impossible to fully comprehend the Project's potential impacts on the environment.

**N. The EIS Fails to Assess Project Impacts on Sensitive Receptors Within the Combat Center**

The Combat Center at Twenty-nine Palms supports more than just combat troops conducting training exercises. It is a comprehensive military installation with on-base housing, on-base shopping centers and restaurants, and on-base civilians. Nevertheless, the EIS fails to address the Project's potential impacts on (1) Combat Center civilians, and (2) Combat Center troops not engaged in Project-related training exercises. Given that the Project will generate substantial noise and air pollution at the Combat Center, this is a major omission that must be corrected.

**CONCLUSION**

As discussed above, the proposed Project cannot be justified in terms of military necessity or cost. And the EIS prepared in support of the Project simply does not meet the minimum analytical standards established under NEPA and controlling case law. In light of these facts, ORBA hereby registers its opposition to the Project and request that the Marine Corps scale back substantially its desire to expand the base at Twenty-Nine Palms.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Project and the Draft EIS. If you have any questions concerning the content of this letter, please contact me at the address or phone number listed above.

Very truly yours,



NEPA-9  
continued

AQ-6

**AQ-6:** Comment noted. The FEIS includes definitions of sensitive receptors and qualitatively discusses how proposed air emissions would impact these receptors.

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Date Received: May 31, 2011

LUCERNE VALLEY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (LVEDA)

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

From: Chuck Bell, Pres.   
P.O. Box 193  
Lucerne Valley, CA 92356  
760 964 3118 *chuck.b@sispa.net*

Date: 5/26/11

RE: 29 PALMS – TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE  
ESTABLISHMENT EIS

LVEDA's Mission Statement:

*Provide a forum for discussion and action on important community issues –  
promote infrastructure improvements – work with County and developers to  
promote development that is both "economic" and compatible with our rural  
lifestyle, environment and resource availability.*

LVEDA fully supports and appreciates our military and its mission – helping to  
maintain our Republic and safety. The following focuses on the inadequacies of  
the DEIS – primarily related to economic impacts.

**CONFLICTING OBJECTIVES:** The Expansion's "MEB-sized training" purpose –  
requiring a tremendous amount of new acreage - conflicts with recent  
statements/news articles re: military objectives – a major discrepancy - thus lacks  
credibility as a viable or necessary "project" – one with a myriad of significant,  
unnecessary impacts – in sink with the "No Action" alternative.

Sec. Gates: The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said,  
but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a  
short period of time.

Also see Gates: Time has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps  
by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and Defense Chief Gates Orders  
Review of Marines' Role by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times.

Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn – Commanding General of Marine Corps Combat  
Development Command – (Mar. 2, 2011):

Two of the recommendations from the Force Structure Review are:  
A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,800 when conditions in  
Afghanistan warrant (and)

NEPA-1

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NEPA-1:

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed  
action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In  
November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a  
large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a  
Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion  
task forces.

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<p>Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental) headquarters from eight to seven; infantry battalions from 27-24); a reduction in cannon artillery battalions (nine to seven; but a reorganization of batteries to support distributed operations), and a reduction in armor (10 companies to 8).</p>	<p>NEPA-1</p>
<p><b>FT. IRWIN ALTERNATIVE:</b> NEPA requires that every feasible alternative needs to be "on the table" and assessed – including the option for joint or separate exercises at Ft. Irwin – particularly enhanced by its recent expansion and its vehicular connectivity. In-house rejections of any viable alternative – for whatever reason – still require full public review and analysis. Its absence nullifies the adequacy of the DEIS.</p>	<p>NEPA-2</p>
<p><b>EAST VS. WEST:</b> Elimination of the eastern alternative area from Sen. Feinstein's recent Desert Protection Act makes it a viable option – selection of which would eliminate the significant impacts and tremendous burdens on communities associated with the western proposal – particularly Alt 6 – and would likely result in quicker implementation – assuming any expansion is really required.</p>	<p>NEPA-3</p>
<p><b>MITIGATION COSTS:</b> A western expansion will require significant costs for tortoise mitigation - which may not even be available in the w. Mojave by the time Congress makes its decision - but certainly at a much higher cost than potential bighorn sheep mitigation in the alternative eastern area. The DEIS lacks the required descriptions of mitigation/compensation areas and projects.</p>	<p>NEPA-4</p>
<p><b>OHV DISPLACEMENT:</b> <u>The EIS totally fails to assess the full environmental implications of Alt. 6.</u> The JV OHV Area is the largest and most established in the nation and cannot be replaced. It provides the space for long-distance race courses no other s. Calif. facility offers. It has become an "icon" not just for off-roading, but for a myriad of other recreational and resource-related land-uses. The other OHV Areas in the Mojave Desert cannot accommodate JV's current use. Even with the small portion of the open area remaining in the Anderson Dry Lake areas adjacent to Camprock Rd. - displacement will result in more local, private land trespass and incursion into environmentally sensitive and protected BLM areas – especially the adjacent Ord Mt. Desert Wildlife Mgt. Area (ACEC).</p>	<p>REC-1</p>
<p>Alt. 6's current configuration will likely preclude access to the JV OHV area's eastern race courses – thus diluting the very integrity of the "joint use" concept – forcing more use and resource destruction in the remaining northwest portion of the open area – not adequately described or mitigated in the DEIS.</p>	
<p>It is critical that BLM maintains its land-use jurisdiction over any expansion area – particularly the "joint use" portion - issuing DOD a R/W or easement for its use – not allowing it to become fully under military authority - thus giving BLM and the public involvement and discretion WHEN (more likely than "IF") DOD – for</p>	

Response to Comment N-18737 (Page 2 of 4):

NEPA-2:

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

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whatever reason – decides in the future that "joint use" is no longer practical and wants full control.

REC-1

**SOCIO/ECONOMICS:** With Alt. 6's substantial reduction of the JV OHV Area and its current function - Lucerne Valley would definitely suffer a significant loss of revenue from OHV-related traffic - major filming/commercials - mining - general recreation - etc. for the Lucerne Valley Market/Hardware (shopping center) - 3 gas stations - our restaurants - a multitude of other businesses, etc. The "profit margin" for our businesses is already a "stay-open/break-even" situation. Loss of current weekend business - 10% and greater total revenue for some - would be the "straw on the camel's back" that would force them to shut down. Our very survival as a community is at stake.

The DEIS totally ignores the fact that Lucerne Valley is a state-designated "Economically Disadvantaged Community" – certainly describing our current economic status that would be especially vulnerable to the disruption caused by Alt. 6's or any other western expansion. The DEIS' "mitigation" of job and sales tax creation (only benefiting the 29 Palms region anyway) absolutely fails to acknowledge or mitigate significant adverse impacts to Lucerne Valley and our viability as a "community" – with so-called "mitigation" having no nexus to our impact – the impact not even considered a "significant" finding - blatantly disregarding our "on the ground" reality and the basic requirements of an adequate NEPA process and document.

SOC-1

Even a direct monetary compensation to the Lucerne Valley "community" wouldn't fully mitigate our ultimate losses. However, DOD could at least ameliorate the effect. Current use of the OHV area is generally split between the Anderson Dry Lake staging areas in the northwest portion and the Soggy Dry lake segment at its southern end. With the likely loss of extensive OHV use in the southern areas - the only usable portion of the JV OHV area remaining would be its western (Anderson area) segment – or what's left of it – with traffic able to access it utilizing Rabbit Springs Rd. directly off Hwy 18 to Camprock Rd. – bypassing the town's commercial corridor. The very least DOD can do to partially alleviate both loss of OHV-related commerce and the impact to the County's marginally maintained Rabbit Springs Rd. (with numerous residences, etc.) - would be to have Caltrans and the County designate Rabbit Springs Rd. for "local use only" – directing OHV-related traffic east through Hwy. 18 and the town's commercial corridor – then east on Hwy 247 (both of which are state highways and better maintained) – enhancing more commercial activity – and provide funding for an east-bound left-turn pocket off Hwy 247 north onto Camprock Rd. to facilitate turning movements and safety.

**IRON ORE MINE:** The recently approved (Hahm) iron ore mining operation within the eastern portion of the expansion area ABSOLUTELY MUST be considered a joint-use – allowing it to operate to its fullest capacity – with no access restrictions, etc. A "buyout" is not mitigation/compensation for our society

LU-1

Response to Comment N-18737 (Page 3 of 4):

**NEPA-3:**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the

Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**NEPA-4:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**REC-1:**

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**SOC-1:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, socioeconomic impacts are expected to be less than significant and unmitigable.

Comment ID: N-18737 (Page 4 of 4)

that cannot afford any further dependence on foreign sources of our basic necessities – critical for our local cement industry – with the only feasible alternate sources in Utah or further east – or more likely China. It would be absolutely irresponsible for DOD – the Marines – which totally depend on iron and steel for its “stuff” – to close down this viable and economically critical mine.

LU-1

ORD MT. CATTLE ALLOTMENT: A significant portion of this active cattle allotment is within northern JV – included in the western expansion area – potentially rendering the Allotment economically useless – with no specific or quantified remedy stated in the DEIS.

NOISE: The DEIS dismisses the effects of intensive noise impacts on Lucerne Valley and surrounding communities – and does not fully describe the full range of related aircraft activity in the expanded air space.

NOI-1

Note: There seem to be discrepancies in the text and summary tables re: findings of significance.

Response to Comment N-18737 (Page 4 of 4):

**LU-1:**

As indicated in Section 2.6 of the EIS individual mine properties would be evaluated before implementation of and selected project alternative to determine whether the property would be acquired or if reasonable access to the property would be afforded so that the operations could continue following project implementation.

**NOI-1:**

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 1 of 9)

Comment ID: N-18738  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**  
 215 North "D" Street, Suite 204 • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490  
 (909) 383-9900 • Fax (909) 383-9901  
 E-mail: lafco@lafco.sbcounty.gov • www.sbcalfco.org  
 Established by the State of California to serve the Citizens, Cities, Special Districts and the County of San Bernardino

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Deputy Clerk to the Commission
  - REBECCA LOWERY  
Deputy Clerk to the Commission
- LEGAL COUNSEL**
- CLARK H. ALSOP

Sent Via mail and email at SMBPLMSWEBPAO@usmc.mil

May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training

To Whom It May Concern:

The Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino County (LAFCO) received the abovementioned notice and would like to provide comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared for the proposed expansion for the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC).

In San Bernardino County, there are a number of agencies that provide a variety of services within the areas identified in the alternative study areas. The proposed base expansion will affect some of these agencies/districts and their ability to serve within these areas identified in the study. Although, most of these agencies/districts were identified in the DEIS, some were not (i.e. Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District, County Service Area 29, etc.). Depending on the alternative pursued by the Marine Corps, some of these agencies/districts may or may not be affected by this proposal.

The following are the agencies/districts that may be affected by the proposed expansion including the services they currently provide (or are authorized to provide):

LU-1

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 1 of 9):

LU-1:

Thank you for your comment. The information provided has been reviewed and added to the EIS as appropriate.

Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 2 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 2 of 9):

Draft EIS  
Proposed Expansion for the MCA GCC  
Page 2 of 5

- Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District (MDRCD) - see Attachment #1 map  

The MDRCD is a district that provides resources conservation within its jurisdiction. It currently provides services such as runoff control, soil erosion prevention, improvement of land capabilities, and habitat preservation. The district collaborates with a number of State and Federal agencies in their conservation programs. It should be noted that the MDRCD overlays the entirety of the base as it currently exists.
- San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (SBCFPD) - see Attachment #2 map  

The SBCFPD, which encompasses the area of San Bernardino County that is not within an independent fire provider's jurisdiction, is authorized to provide the following services related to fire protection: structural, watershed, prevention, inspection, suppression, weed abatement, hazardous materials services, rescue, first aid, paramedic, ambulance transportation, emergency response, and disaster preparedness planning. Both the SBCFPD South Desert and the SBCFPD North Desert Service Zones may be affected by this proposal, including the SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley – east of the City of Twentynine Palms), which is a special taxing entity within the South Desert Service Zone. It should also be noted that the SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone overlays the entirety of the base as it currently exists.
- Mojave Water Agency (MWA) – see Attachment #3 map  

The MWA is a special act water agency that provides wholesale water within its boundaries (water from the State Water Project). In cooperation with other water entities, MWA is also responsible for managing the water resources within its boundaries to ensure a sustainable supply of water for the benefit of its constituents. In addition, MWA is also the court-appointed Watermaster for the Mojave River Basin adjudication. It should also be noted that the lower portion of the West Study Area is within MWA's Improvement District M, which was formed to fund the pipeline to recharge the basins located in the Yucca Valley region.
- County Service Area 29 (CSA 29) – see Attachment #4 map  

CSA 29 is a county service area that provide cemetery, TV transiator, park and recreation, street lighting and water services within its boundaries, which is generally identified as the Lucerne Valley area. The district is also authorized to provide sewer service and has the ability to provide such service in the future, if needed.
- Bighorn Desert View Water Agency (BDVWA) - see also Attachment #4 map  

BDVWA provides domestic and retail water service within the communities of Johnson Valley, Flamingo Heights, and Landers. The district is developing plans in conjunction with MWA for recharge of water to the groundwater basin.

LU-1

Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 3 of 9)

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Proposed Expansion for the MCAGCC  
Page 3 of 5

- County Service Area 70 Improvement Zone M (Wonder Valley) see also Attachment #4 map
- CSA 70 M is a county service area zone that provides park and recreation services within its current boundaries through imposition of special taxes.

LU-1

Below is a table that identifies the different areas (East, South, and West Study Areas) and a range of reasonable alternatives that were evaluated in the DEIS. Depending on the alternative use, the matrix below identifies the agencies/districts that may potentially be affected.

	East Study Area	South Study Area	West Study Area
Alternative 1	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>• BDVWA</li> <li>• CSA 29</li> </ul>
Alternative 2	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>• BDVWA</li> </ul>
Alternative 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	None

LU-2

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 3 of 9):

LU-2, CI-1:

As indicated in Section 2.8 of the EIS, the Combat Center would complete and implement the Installation Energy and Sustainability Strategy (IESS) that balances water demands (including those associated with the proposed action) with water supplies by increasing water conservation, using more recycled water, importing water, treating lower quality groundwater, and/or other methods deemed appropriate. The strategy would address sustainable water usage within the Combat Center, as well as regional water management, particularly if the strategy included groundwater extraction from other than the Surprise Spring aquifer.

Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 4 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 4 of 9):

AIR-1:

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Draft EIS  
Proposed Expansion for the MCAGCC  
Page 4 of 5

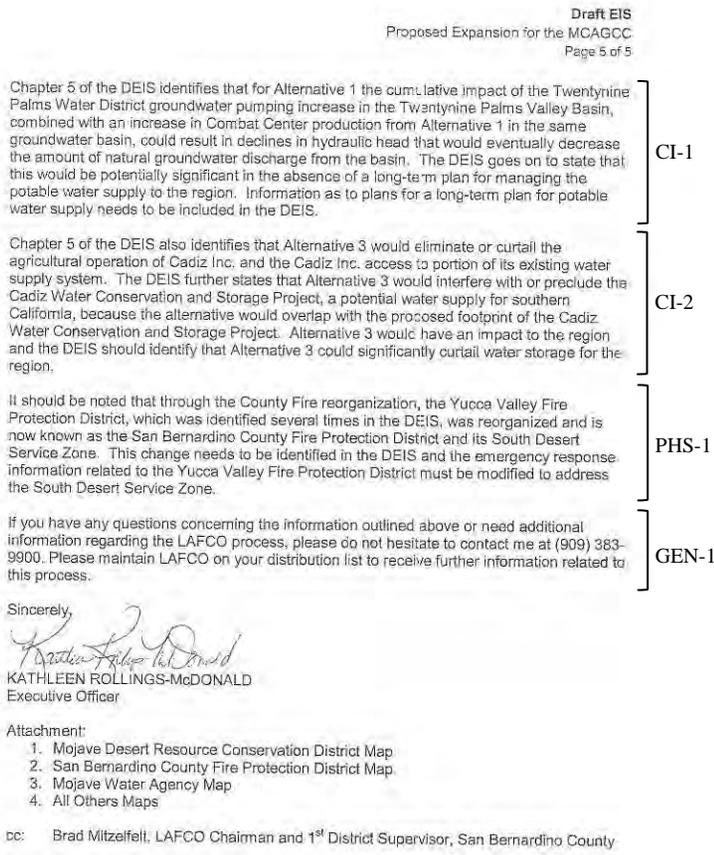
Alternative 4	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Limitations may exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Alternative 5	None	None	<p><i>Limitations may exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>MWA</li> </ul> <p><i>Limitations may also exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Aggregate Land Study Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>BDVWA</li> <li>CSA 29</li> </ul>

LU-2

Chapter 4 of the DEIS identifies a potential effect on the instrument approaches for the Big Bear Airport. The airport is operated by the Big Bear Airport District. Mitigation or measures to counter the potential effect are not identified in the DEIS. Mitigation should be identified in the document.

AIR-1

Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 5 of 9)



Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 5 of 9):

CI-2:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS states that “while acquisition of the Cadiz Inc. land may be beneficial for the water supply on the Combat Center, it would have a regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project.”

PHS-1:

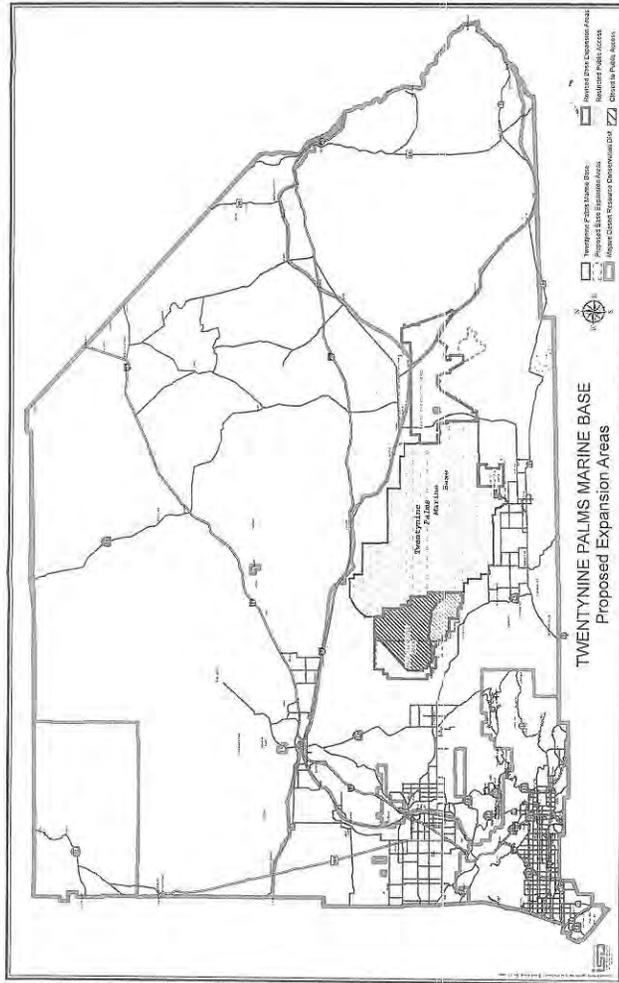
The EIS has been updated to reflect the change from Yucca Valley Fire Protection District to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District. The Final EIS has been modified as appropriate.

GEN-1:

Thank you for your comment. Your contact information will remain on the distribution list.

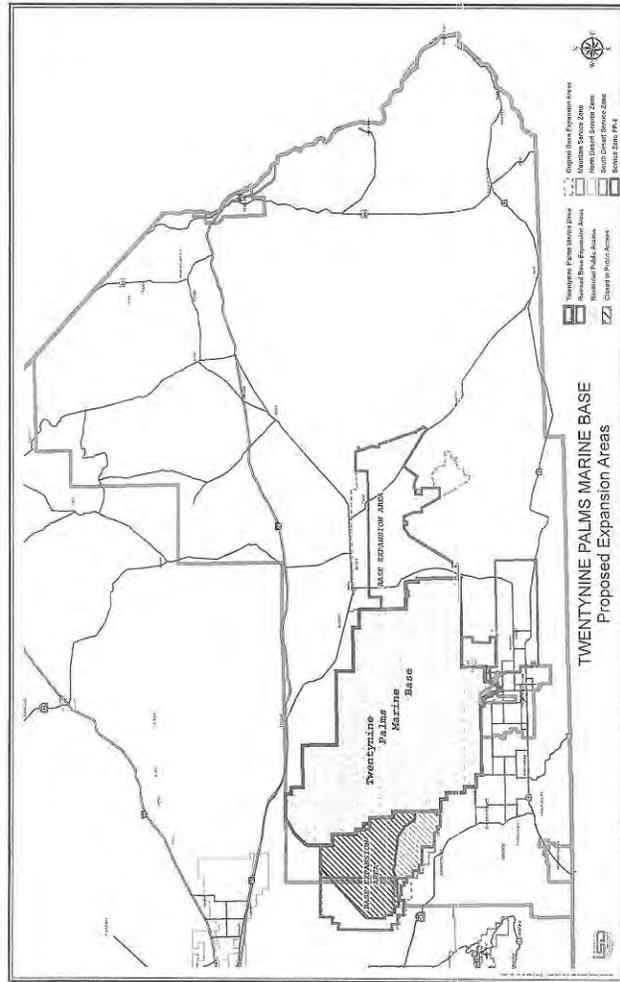
Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 6 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 6 of 9):



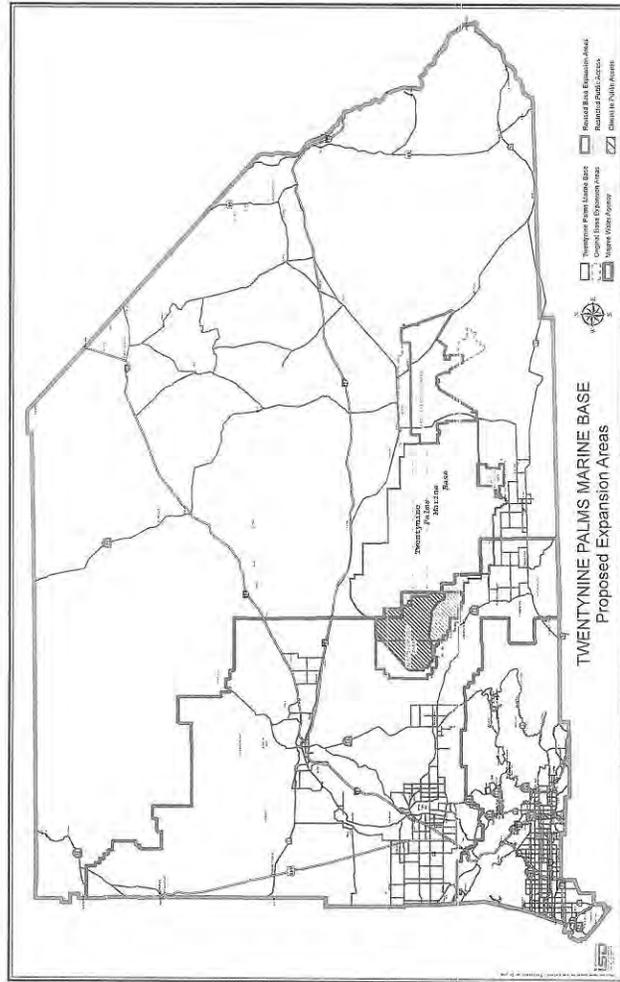
Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 7 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 7 of 9):



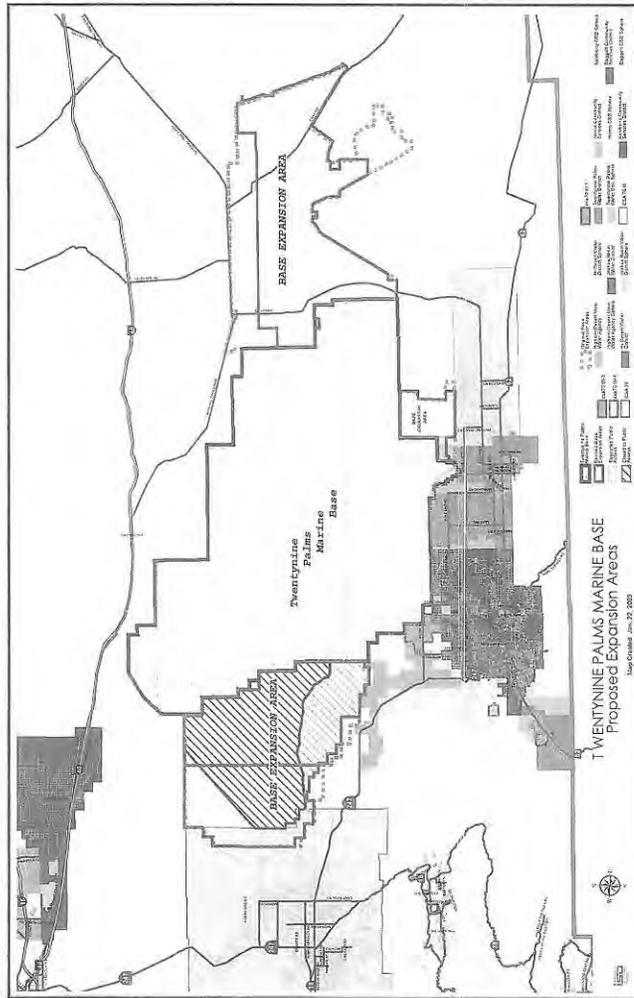
Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 8 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 8 of 9):



Comment ID: N-18738 (Page 9 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18738 (Page 9 of 9):



Comment ID: N-18739 (Page 1 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18739 (Page 1 of 3):

LU-1:

Thank you for your comment. Additional research has been conducted related to mining operations in the EIS study areas. Additional information on mining has been added to multiple resources sections.

Comment ID: N-18739  
Date Received: May 31, 2011  
**LAND USE SERVICES DEPARTMENT**  
ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE  
395 North Arrowhead Avenue • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0187  
(909) 387-4431 Fax (909) 387-3223  
<http://www.sbcounty.gov/landuseservices>



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

CHRISTINE KELLY  
Director

May 25, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL

RE: NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)  
FOR THE 29 PALMS TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT

Dear Project Manager,

The County appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the Draft (EIS) for the proposed establishment of a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, (the "Combat Center").

1. Morris Lode Mineral Resources

Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 presented in the EIS identify potential impacts to mining, including the Morris Lode deposit. The EIS notes that the Morris Lode Mine has an estimated 30 years worth of iron ore reserves. This mine is on a patented claim, and the County has recently granted the operators of the mine a California State Surface Mining and Reclamation Act (SMARA) permit. The mine is expected to begin operations this year.

The County has identified the Morris Lode as having proven economic potential in the Johnson Valley. Southern California cement plants depend on iron sources for required raw materials. Currently, there are two iron mines operating in the Southern California / Western Nevada area: the Silver Lake and Baxter mines. Both of these have finite lives, and the Morris Lode is the only identified future source of iron for the eight cement plants operating in the southern California region. The next nearest producing iron mine is near Cedar City, Utah.

Section 4.12 of the EIS identifies the potential loss of the Morris Lode as "less than significant" relative to national or worldwide supplies of iron ore. However on a regional basis, the loss of the Morris Lode would be a significant impact. The Southern California cement plants would be forced to transport iron ore from out of state and the region would lose a valuable mineral resource. This transport of ore from out of state would result in increased truck vehicle miles and potentially significant increases to air pollutant and greenhouse (GHG) emissions. The EIS should be revised to address these impacts.

LU-1

GREGORY D. DEVEREAUX  
Chief Executive Officer

Board of Supervisors  
BRAD MITZELFELT, Vice Chairman First District  
JANICE RUTHERFORD, Second District  
JOSIE GONZALES, Third District

NINA DEFRY, Third District  
GARY C. COMPTON, Fourth District

Comment ID: N-18739 (Page 2 of 3)

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) FOR THE 29 PALMS TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT  
May 25, 2011  
Page 2 of 3

Although the EIS offers that decisions on whether to purchase a mining claim, or provide access to the claim, would be made on a case-by-case basis, it does not identify the criteria that the Department of Navy will use to make such decisions. The County requests that the EIS identify appropriate criteria for allowing mining operations, including the value of regionally important mineral resources, and consultations with the County and mine owners.

LU-1

2. Socioeconomic Impacts

Section 4.3.2.4 of the EIS acknowledges that the acquisition of the Morris Lode Mine would have a potential future indirect impact on the economy. However the EIS then states that there are too many unknown factors involved in estimating the future value of this potential and that attempting to quantify these impacts would be speculative.

SOC-1

Information regarding the economics of California's cement industry is readily available. California is the largest cement producing state in the U.S., accounting for between 10% and 15% of U.S. cement production and cement industry employment. The Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory published a cement industry study indicating that the cement industry employed about 2,000 workers and contributed \$850 million to California's economy. Cement is California's second most important mineral commodity, after construction aggregates, and represents 25% of California's total annual mineral production. About 80% of the cement produced in California is consumed within the State. Eight of the eleven plants manufacturing cement are located in Southern California. Three are located in Victor Valley area, in close proximity to the Morris Lode Iron Mine, and these plants produce nearly five million tons of cement annually, or about 40% of California's annual production.

The loss of the Morris Lode Mine would result in potentially significant increases to the cost to manufacture cement, increasing the cost of cement in California and reducing economic benefits associated with the jobs and revenue that the mine would generate. These impacts are both local and regional. The County requests that the EIS use available information regarding the California mining industry and the Morris Lode Mine resources to quantify the economic impact that the loss of the mine would have to the local and regional economy.

3. Cadiz Valley Water Project

WAT-1

Alternative 3 presented in the EIS would encompass the private landholding owned by Cadiz Inc. in the northern portion of the east study area. This alternative would result in the potential loss of current agricultural operations on the Cadiz property, as well as the potential loss of groundwater extraction, recharge and storage opportunities from underneath the property. The EIS identifies the Cadiz Valley Dry Year Supply Project as an aquifer storage, recovery, and dry-year supply project designed to provide southern California with as much as 150,000 acre-feet (AF) per year, and identifies the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Cadiz Groundwater Storage and Dry-Year Supply Program (MWD and BLM 2001) as the source for this information. However, the FEIR was never certified and the Cadiz Valley Dry Year Supply Project was never approved. A modified water conservation, recovery and storage project is currently being proposed by Santa Margarita Water District's (SMWD) for the Cadiz property. (Reference Notice of Preparation of a Draft EIR Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery, and Storage Project SCH # 2011031002.) Current entitlements for the Cadiz property include: GPA/90-0017, CUP/90-0019, CUP/90-0031, CUP/90-0032 and CUP/95-0015 (as revised). Maximum entitlements permitted under GPA/90-0017, CUP/90-0019, CUP/90-0031, CUP/90-0032 are limited to the groundwater

Response to Comment N-18739 (Page 2 of 3):

SOC-1:

Additional research has been conducted related to mining operations in the EIS study areas. Additional information on mining has been added to multiple resources sections.

WAT-1:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 would have a “regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project.” The EIS also states that the Cadiz project was uncertain and undergoing environmental review process. The EIS has been revised to update the Cadiz project description for the Final EIS using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc and others. These revisions are not likely to alter the significance of cumulative impacts from Alternative 3.

Comment ID: N-18739 (Page 3 of 3)

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) FOR THE 29 PALMS TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT  
May 25, 2011  
Page 3 of 3

extraction assumptions evaluated under certified Final EIR SCH #89020203, and Mitigation Measure WRS which stipulates provisions for groundwater monitoring. The County requests the EIS correct and update its discussion regarding potential groundwater operations on the Cadiz property.

4. Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Impacts

The EIS finds that the action alternatives (depending on the alternative selected) would be inconsistent with the Johnson Valley OHV Area Management Plan and the extraordinary uniqueness of the regional setting. Additionally, any action would result in an unavoidable adverse impact relative to the loss of access to and the use of substantial portions of the Johnson Valley OHV Area. The DEIS does not attempt to identify mitigation measures that would replace the OHV areas lost to the project. Finding suitable mitigation land which would accommodate the level of use that occurs is unlikely, considering how the desert has been allocated. These impacts are both local and cumulative. If the alternative selected reflects the loss of a dramatic amount of Johnson Valley, the largest OHV area in the country, then the loss may lead to an increase in illegal OHV use. In addition to the socioeconomic impacts, this loss would have a potentially tremendous impact on habitat and other environmental issues. The economic impact to the business communities along Highway 247 and Highway 82 is a concern. The County requests that the EIS identify mitigation measures that would replace OHV areas impacted by the project and provide a proposed recreation plan or program in order to access the area remaining and how the plan or program will be administered.

The County appreciates Department of the Navy's attention to its concerns regarding the deficiencies of the NOP. The County looks forward to working with the Department to achieve a thorough and adequate EIS.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (909) 387-4431 should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

  
CHRISTINE KELLY, Director  
Land Use Services Department

cc: Andrew Silva, Analyst, First District  
George Watson, Chief of Staff, Third District  
Steven Hauer, Deputy Chief of Staff, Third District  
Gregory C. Devereaux, Chief Executive Officer, County of San Bernardino  
Gerry Newcombe, Deputy Executive Officer, County of San Bernardino  
Judy Tatman, Supervising Planner, Land Use Services Department  
George Kenline, Mining Geologist, Land Use Services Department  
Gerald Hillier, Hillier Consulting and Management

WAT-1

REC-1

Response to Comment N-18739 (Page 3 of 3):

REC-1:

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Comment ID: N-18740 (Page 1 of 5)

Comment ID: N-18740  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 26, 2011

Writer's contact information:  
John P. Cleveland  
258 Avenida Montalvo Apt. A  
San Clemente, CA 92672  
johnpcleveland@yahoo.com

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132

Via e-mail to [SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil). U.S. Mail, upload at [https://extranet.tecine.com/29Palms\\_DEIS/](https://extranet.tecine.com/29Palms_DEIS/)

Re: *Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for the proposed Expansion of the 29 Palms USMC Base*

Dear Project Manager:

I am writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for the proposed Expansion of the 29 Palms USMC Base ("Draft EIS"). I recreate frequently in Johnson Valley and participate in American Motorcyclist Association District 37 motorcycle racing events held in Johnson Valley. The public Off Highway Vehicle ("OHV") land in Johnson Valley is to Southern California, as Central Park is to New Yorkers. The proposed expansion would eliminate the largest and most important single piece of OHV land in the United States.

The detrimental effect of taking this large contiguous piece of land is multiplied by Johnson Valley's proximity to the densely populated Southern California population. In other words, no other piece of land is more important to a greater number of recreational users. The primary flaw in the Draft EIS is its failure to recognize the nexus of (1) Johnson Valley's large contiguous OHV space; and (2) its close proximity to dense population centers of Southern California, which are filled with millions of persons who use the public lands for recreating. The Draft EIS does not include an adequate analysis of the value associated with this nexus. The Draft EIS fails to address the heightened effect/harm caused by taking the most important piece of land closest to the greatest number of users in the country. The failure to evaluate all of the recreational impacts of eliminating this OHV land is reason alone for stopping the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley or, at a minimum, requiring a supplemental environmental impact analysis and allowing for further public comments. The Draft EIS suffers from other flaws and does not conform to the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") as more specifically stated below.

1

Response to Comment N-18740 (Page 1 of 5):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18740 (Page 2 of 5)**

For the reasons state herein, I object to Draft EIS and the proposed expansion of the 29 Palms base into Johnson Valley, demand further analysis and preparation of a revised draft EIS that is corrected and allows for further public comment. Without waiving any rights and without conceding the adequacy or accuracy of the Draft EIS in anyway, I request that the no action alternative be selected. I further object to any alternative that takes public land in Johnson Valley. Without a supplemental analysis in the form of a revised draft EIS, the Draft EIS underlying this proposed 29 Palms expansion will remain incomplete and inaccurate and any taking/withdrawal of land based on the Draft EIS would be inconsistent with NEPA and the requirements for completing an EIS.

**I. The Draft EIS Does Not Sufficiently Identify a Need for Action**

The scoping and contemplated expansion of the 29 Palms base was initiated years ago under the Bush administration. The United States budget deficit and changing military needs do not currently warrant any expansion, and in particular the expansion of the base into Johnson Valley. Military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan have been scaled down since the initial scoping period. A supplemental Draft EIS should be prepared which appropriately states the need for the expansion under current budget and military conditions.

The need for taking Johnson Valley land has not been articulated and the reasons for selecting 29 Palms for expansion over other base alternatives, such as South Carolina, was not adequately addressed in the Draft EIS. Although the expansion into Johnson Valley may be convenient for the Marines, it is not necessary. The military claims that no other base in the U.S. is more appropriate than 29 Palms for expansion. The Marine's contend 29 Palms is already so large that a further expansion at 29 Palms into Johnson Valley would be the most appropriate place to fulfill their training objections—in essence 29 Palms is "too big to fail." The contention does not constitute a valid statement of a purpose or need for the expansion into Johnson Valley under NEPA.

Although expanding 29 Palms may be convenient for the military, when that convenience is balanced against the full impact of the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley, the scale tips decidedly in favor of no action, or no expansion into Johnson Valley. In fact, when I attended an Open House Public Meeting presented by the military in Victorville, California on April 14, 2011, I met with Lt. Col. Bruce Nyholm and Lt. Col. Brent Nyquist who explained that the Marines would only be actively using live ordnance in the proposed Johnson Valley portion of the 29 Palm base expansion for three (3) days per year, per live exercise (to be held twice a year). Removing public land from Johnson Valley for such a minimal amount of time cannot be justified when the cost and impacts of the proposed expansion are considered.

Given the failure to articulate a need for the expansion under current conditions, the current budget crises, the significant impact on the Southern California economy and OHV recreational opportunities, the need for an accurate and complete Draft EIS is all the more important.

**Response to Comment N-18740 (Page 2 of 5):**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID: N-18740 (Page 3 of 5)**

**2. All Environmental Consequences Have Not Been Adequately Evaluated**

The Draft EIS does not consider all of the environmental impacts of the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley. If Johnson Valley were taken, current users would very likely need to travel longer distances to reach open OHV land. The effect on OHV users travelling longer distances to alternative OHV sites has not been considered. The Draft EIS could have, but did not, identify the location of alternative OHV recreational areas to which the millions of persons who currently use Johnson Valley will have to drive in order to recreate, nor the environmental impact of that change or relocation including, without limitation, the effect on air quality and carbon emissions. The air quality and carbon footprint of travelling those distances has not been adequately considered. The Draft EIS is insufficient without such an analysis.

**3. The Analysis of the Impact on Recreation is Inadequate**

Johnson Valley is a unique open land used by millions of people for various OHV purposes. People from Southern California, Northern California, Nevada, Idaho and other areas around the country regularly use Johnson Valley for national motorcycle competitions. The Draft EIS fails to consider the national consequences of eliminating this open OHV space used by persons across the nation and the effect of eliminating this national resource. Further, as mentioned above, the Draft EIS fails to evaluate the nexus between the OHV land in Johnson Valley and the densely populated Southern California area. Supplemental analysis should be conducted to evaluate the adverse recreational impact on all users including, without limitation, residents of Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Diego County Ventura County, Riverside County, Southern Nevada, and Idaho.

A supplemental draft EIS should identify and include the cost of providing the public with substantially similar substitute lands on which they might recreate.

**4. The Analysis of the Socio-Economic and Environmental Justice Impacts is Inadequate**

The report is woefully inadequate in its evaluation of economic impacts. The scope of the socio-economic and environmental justice impacts is too narrow and the analysis contains unfounded assumptions. If Johnson Valley is taken most, if not all, of the recreational activity occurring therein will be lost along with the sales revenue, jobs, and tax revenue associated with that recreation. The Draft EIS does not consider the effect of lost sales throughout the nation let alone Southern California, lost sales taxes, lost state and federal income taxes, lost employment, and lost property taxes. For example, in direct connection with my use of Johnson Valley I spend on average approximately \$150 on motorcycle parts per month, another approximate \$150 on fuel travelling to and returning home from Johnson Valley each trip. I also buy groceries and supplies for camping in Johnson Valley and I buy food at restaurants in connection with my trips to and from Johnson Valley; the money spent on these food and supply items ranges from approximately \$50 to \$300 for a group of persons, per trip. Depending on the circumstances, I buy these items in Johnson Valley, in the surrounding communities, and/or near my home in Orange County, California. The Draft EIS fails to adequately evaluate the economic impact of my spending outside the small town of Johnson Valley the effect of that lost spending activity if

**Response to Comment N-18740 (Page 3 of 5):**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18740 (Page 4 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18740 (Page 4 of 5):

Johnson Valley is taken. As a result, the Draft EIS economic analysis is inadequate and should be supplemented.

As to the Draft EIS's consideration of the impact of my spending in Johnson Valley, the report makes assumptions and under-estimates the amount of money spent by users of Johnson Valley. The Draft EIS should be revised to more accurately identify the number of people and the amounts spent by those people travelling to and from Johnson Valley and how those figures will change if Johnson Valley is taken in whole or in part.

**5. The Analysis of the Public Health and Safety Impacts is Inadequate**

The Draft EIS fails to consider the expansion's potential for increasing illegal off-road use and related adverse effects on the public's health and safety. Although not appropriate, the reality is that the taking of the single most valuable piece of contiguous OHV land in California without sufficient mitigation measure of providing substantially similar substitute land would very likely lead to illegal OHV because many persons would no longer have accessible public land on which to recreate. The Draft EIS does not address the consequences and costs of this activity including, without limitation, additional lawful enforcement activity.

The Draft EIS and the military's entire plan for massive live fire drills, including the use of major jet fighter and other aircraft, so close to major population centers is alarming. The Draft EIS does not adequately address the potential adverse public health and safety impact of: (1) potential errant munitions harming the public, animals, or natural resources surrounding the 29 Palms base; and (2) the potential for unexploded ordinance at or near the proposed expansion borders to cause harm to the public, animals or nature resources surrounding the base. No matter how small the chance of such harm, the consequences would be severe. Supplemental analysis should address the risk and impact of these potential harms.

**6. The Analysis of the Adverse Impact on Cultural Resources Inadequate**

The Draft EIS fails to adequately evaluate the adverse effect on cultural resources. The decision to expand the 29 Palms base in a manner that takes any or all of Johnson Valley goes against American principles of freedom and family. Johnson Valley contains open lands with varied views of vistas, geologic formations and contiguous open spaces that are uniquely suitable for motorcycle and other desert racing. Families use Johnson Valley for camping and competing in off-road motorcycle racing events and enjoy the freedom provided by large expanses of open OHV space. Children and adults compete, exercise, and learn to solve problems and operate independently in challenging desert racing events. This desert racing culture has been enjoyed by multiple generations of families. The OHV land in Johnson Valley cannot be replaced—no other similar open OHV land exists in California. The Draft EIS fails to evaluate the harmful human effect of eliminating this culture and this cultural experience of recreating in this manner in the remote environment offered only in Johnson Valley.

To allow a taking of this valuable land without conforming to the requirements of NEPA and based on a flawed EIS would undercut the very principles of freedom that Marines fight to protect in the first place.

Comment ID: N-18740 (Page 5 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18740 (Page 5 of 5):

7. Conclusion

The Draft EIS is incomplete under NEPA and inaccurate as written. In order to properly evaluate the full costs and impacts of the proposed 29 Palms expansion, supplemental analysis and/or a supplemental draft EIS and corrections to the existing Draft EIS are required. I object to any expansion of the base into the OHV areas of Johnson Valley and request that a supplemental Draft EIS report be completed with opportunity for further public comments for the reasons stated herein.

Sincerely,



John P. Cleveland

Comment ID: N-18741 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18741  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

161990 Simitrust Cr  
Palma Inc CA 92252  
Tel 360 9898

Naval Facilities  
Eng. Command SW 26 May 2011  
Attn: Palma EIS Pm  
1250 Pacific Hwy.  
San Diego CA 92132-5190

Dear Palma EIS Project Manager:

Please accept these written  
comments in lieu of testimony  
against the proposed expansion  
of MCRABCE 2d Palma.

That's right. I'm opposed  
to any expansion of the  
facilities in any direction.  
My family has lived in  
the Marine Base since 1952.  
Four generations of us.  
In that time we have  
witnessed the transformation  
of Argentine Palma from the  
Hub of Commerce - Banking,  
shopping, entertainment and  
education - initially promoted  
by the establishment and  
growth of our Marine Base -  
to the area to a military

Response to Comment N-18741 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Section 4.3 also evaluates expected environmental justice impacts.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18741 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18741 (Page 2 of 3):

now particularly because of the military practice of siting retail and dining facilities on the base instead of in the City where they could be used by the general public.

IV. The Galunson Valley recreation area to the West of the base provides more than tourist revenue and a fair share of land use for OHV riders. Millions of <sup>dollars</sup> are saved because of the safety value that the ~~GV~~ recreation area provides for Morongo Basin law enforcement, OHV enforcement, Code enforcement and road maintenance expenses. After years of review at the County of San Bernardino level and years of negotiations between conservationists and OHV enthusiasts, everyone seems to have just gotten the message of peaceful co-existence. Why mess with that?

Comment ID: N-18741 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18741 (Page 3 of 3):

biological, geological, archaeological,  
historical, commercial and  
open space resources – all of  
which serve us better than  
an expansion of the largest  
naval base in the world

IV. Environmental justice is not  
served by this proposal,  
which would establish  
a military installation in  
these deserts while  
destroying the self-determination  
of Mojave Basin residents  
and the life they choose for  
themselves.

Respectfully submitted  
I. m. Chettle

Comment ID: N-18742 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18742  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Date: May 24, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29-Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

As a property owner in Johnson Valley I am concerned with the impact of the 29-Palms Base Expansion and I feel there are significant areas of concern in the DEIS.

The DEIS does not state the inadequacy of mitigation lands to replace OHV recreational areas removed from public access. There are not enough public lands in the California Desert Conservation Area to mitigate the proposed Base expansion. There certainly are no lands available in the vicinity of the Johnson Valley OHV area, contiguous to or accessible from the existing area.

Therefore there is no mitigation for the economic losses to the Homestead Valley. There are no potential mitigation measures stated for Socio-economics, Cultural Resources and Environmental Justice in the Homestead Valley. Therefore, because there is no discussion of how the issue of mitigation lands can be addressed, the document cannot meet NEPA requirements.

On Page 33, Table ES-3 states: Mitigation measures will be developed in consultation with SHPO, the Tribes and interested parties. In addition, the ICRMP would be modified and developed in consultation with SHPO and the Native American Tribes that have an interest in lands under the jurisdiction of the Marine Corps. However, as the DEIS area does NOT include the Homestead Valley communities per se, it is not clear what mitigation measures, if any, will be considered for them.

Stating mitigation measures will be developed in the future leaves no basis for judgment as to whether any mitigation measures are possible at all. Therefore, the DEIS must be changed to clarify and enumerate any mitigation measures.

The DEIS estimates revenue lost due to reduction in OHV visits in the Lucerne Valley area, an historic agricultural settlement that is a close neighbor of the Homestead Valley; it also mentions the Town of Yucca Valley. They are described as "the nearest communities with any appreciable retail and traveler services presence that can support the purchasing needs of people visiting Johnson Valley." It is true that both have markets, fuel, restaurants and other services within a half-hour drive of the OHV area. But the DEIS is completely dismissing the presence of the commercial zone on Hwy 247 in Flamingo Heights that also enjoys a huge increase in business on the big weekends, and are even closer to the OHV area. These merchants and restaurants are very important to residents in the Homestead Valley. However, there is not enough local population to keep them in business. They rely heavily on travelers on Hwy 247, especially those enjoying the Johnson Valley OHV area.

SOC-1

CR-1

SOC-2

Response to Comment N-18742 (Page 1 of 2):

**SOC-1:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**CR-1:**

EIS Section 4.11 discusses potential mitigation measures. At this point in time, potential mitigation measures are unknown. The EIS does note some possibilities for potential mitigation measures including avoidance and protection or data recovery.

**SOC-2:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Regional economic impact analysis includes analysis of county-wide impacts, to include Flamingo Heights.

Comment ID: N-18742 (Page 2 of 2)

DEIS does not report that most grocery stores operate on a profit of 3 to 5 percent. Loss of 7 plus percent, as is stated for the Lucerne Valley Market and Hardware, almost guarantees closure of the business. The smaller businesses in the Homestead Valley also would be severely impacted. When these businesses close, there will be no place for the residents to buy supplies locally. The document must be corrected to give the true picture of what the base expansion will do to these neighbors.

SOC-2

The DEIS compares loss of property tax from acquired lands to total county dollars received from taxes, rather than make the comparison with other rural desert communities' tax dollars. Therefore the reader is completely misled as to the true magnitude of the loss. Not only should the comparison be between rural desert communities, the preparers do not address what those lost dollars have been supporting, and how that loss will impact these communities (i.e. waste management, library, park, county services, etc.) The seemingly small number of tax dollars may just mean the difference between a facility remaining open or closed, or services being provided or not. The county of San Bernardino is already undergoing severe budget cuts, due to economic conditions that did not exist when these expansion plans were begun. Therefore the DEIS fails to accurately portray and evaluate impacts, and must be corrected to reflect real-time conditions, which are not forecast to change very soon.

SOC-3

The DEIS estimates creation of 90 new jobs, of which about 77 will be on base and 13 off base. The DEIS states lost merchant jobs and dollars from reduced recreational opportunities are not significant and will likely be made up by the new jobs created and more Marines moving in and out of 29 Palms.

As most of the new jobs, if not all, are likely to be located in the city of 29 Palms (the base headquarters) the preparers of this DEIS have ignored the impact of lost dollars on more distant communities in the Homestead Valley and beyond. Lost jobs in Lucerne Valley cannot be mitigated by a few jobs in 29 Palms. The death or near death of small but historic desert communities near the Johnson Valley OHV Area has not been given due consideration.

SOC-4

Therefore the DEIS fails to give a true picture of the very significant impacts on the job market in the Homestead Valley, and it must be corrected.

Sincerely,



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Sierra Madre, CA 91024-2646  
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Johnson Valley, CA 92285-2874

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<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

Response to Comment N-18742 (Page 2 of 2):

SOC-3:

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be lost tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Section 4.3 clearly identifies the expected decline in county and local sales tax revenue, for each action alternative.

SOC-4:

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each action alternative. As noted in the EIS, Alternative 3 would be expected to lead to potential net job losses while Alternatives 1,2,4,5 and 6 would be expected to lead to potential net job increases. Estimates of changes in Net jobs are calculated on a county-wide basis.

Comment ID: N-18743 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18743  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Date: May 24, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29-Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

As a property owner in Johnson Valley I am concerned with the impact of the 29-Palms Base Expansion and I feel there are significant areas of concern in the DEIS.

The DEIS states that under the Marines' preferred Alternative 6, access to and use of approximately 56% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be lost, representing a significant impact. It does acknowledge that the resource is unique to the region, given its combination of vast open space, large variety of desert views and scenic vistas, and unique geologic formations.

It does not emphasize the region is considered unique to the entire country, and draws visitors from all over the world. 44% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be available for public recreation for an unspecified and possibly variable 10 months per year (for the portion acquired as Restricted Public Access area), or all of the year (for the area not acquired, which is the farthest west). It does acknowledge that the displacement of recreational users to the remaining portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would result in significant impacts to recreational resources in the west study area.

This brings us to the impact on the community next to the westward expansion area, less than five miles outside the study area.

The unincorporated community of Johnson Valley lies directly south of what became the Johnson Valley OHV Area over 30 years ago. The Johnson Valley Improvement Association (JVIA) was begun 53 years ago for the benefit of the early homesteaders.

JVIA volunteers built, maintain and operate the Johnson Valley Community Center, which is the hub of social and educational activities in this isolated and widely scattered settlement. It also served as an emergency center after the 1992 earthquake. Three meals a day for over two weeks were served to all comers, and those who needed shelter found it there.

The DEIS does not specifically address impacts on the Johnson Valley community, although researchers for the document and other Marine representatives repeatedly visited during the scoping period. Several focus group meetings were held in the Community Center building, overlooking the valley the Marines wish to close to public access. When the expansion plans were originally formed, the planners may not have known that citizens lived in Johnson Valley. But USMC representatives did come and meet them. They listened closely to the citizens' comments, and took copious notes. But as was feared, the overwhelming impact of the proposed actions on Johnson Valley is not

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18743 (Page 1 of 2):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18743 (Page 2 of 2)

reflected in the DEIS. To a reader in another part of the US who may know nothing about the California high desert and its history, they are rated as less than significant, and therefore the document is misleading and must be corrected.

The Johnson Valley Community Center is largely supported by the breakfast it serves each Saturday (cooked and served by volunteers) to the "weekenders" who own property in Johnson Valley, and the visitors from the OHV area.

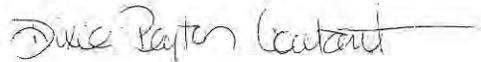
Page 557, Table 4.3-13 shows the estimated loss of 24.6% in direct expenditures in the area if the preferred Alternative 6 is chosen. This will be even greater for the Community Center during the two or more months the public would not be allowed access during training exercises. Those two months will be during Spring and Fall, which are the months of largest use of the OHV area, and attendance at the Saturday Breakfast. It is not unusual to serve 120+ guests on long weekends when the weather is good. It is not unusual to see that number dwindle to 40 in the high summertime.

Therefore the denial of public access to the remnant "shared use" area will inevitably reduce the numbers of guests at the Saturday Breakfast, as well as the number of potential property owners attracted to Johnson Valley. It will jeopardize the future of the JVIA and of the Community Center.

Therefore, the DEIS must be corrected to make it very clear to even the most cursory of readers that the economy, and very existence of Johnson Valley, and indeed the viability of all the historic Homestead Valley communities, are threatened under all Alternatives except #3, due to the closure or partial denial of public access to the Johnson Valley OHV area. It must also state that these impacts were not properly presented in the draft document.

We also strongly urge an extension of the May 26 public comment period, as there are many citizens who are only now learning about the proposed Base expansion, and need more time to go into this enormous document in detail.

Sincerely,



Dixie Peyton Coutant  
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626-355-4908

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Johnson Valley, CA 92285-2874

[dixie@coutant.com](mailto:dixie@coutant.com)  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminlernet/saga/index.html>

NEPA-1

SOC-1

GEN-1

GEN-2

Response to Comment N-18743 (Page 2 of 2):

**SOC-1:**

Comment noted. The Marine Corps has not made a decision on what two months of the year that the RPAA would be closed to public use.

**GEN-1, GEN-2:**

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18744 (Page 1 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18744 (Page 1 of 5):

Comment ID: N-18744  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



May 23, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

*RE: 29Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Draft EIS*

I am writing on behalf of the American Motorcyclist Association District 37 Off-Road (AMA D37 Off-Road). We are a non-profit organization dedicated to providing our members with fun, family oriented events, and protecting the rights of our members to be able to enjoy the sport of motorcycling. AMA D37 Off-Road has been involved with protecting the rights of motorcyclists for over 40 years. We have over 3500 members and hold 40 events a year in the high desert of Southern California, half of those are held in the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

**GENERAL COMMENTS**

My group believes that the "No Action" alternative is the only reasonable option in this situation. Considering the federal governments massive debt it would be financially irresponsible for the Department of Defense to fund this project. The preferred alternative would devastate the local businesses that serve the OHV enthusiasts in the area. The taking of this land, in the form of the preferred alternative, would all but eliminate most events that currently occur in Johnson Valley. Therefore the amount of money that is spent in Lucerne Valley, Johnson Valley, Victorville and other surrounding communities that serve the events attendees would be severely decreased.

If the Department of Defense chooses to move forward with any type of expansion then the only acceptable "Action" alternative is the eastward expansion studied in Alternative 3. This alternative does not impact OHV recreation or the economies of the surrounding communities. Even the eastward expansion alternative would be an imprudent use of our county's limited financial resources.

The DEIS as written has several fatal flaws. Those flaws include neglecting to address certain scoping comments, insufficient data for visitor-days of use, insufficient data for analyzing economic impacts, ineffective mitigation measures, and an insufficient range of alternatives. Because of these and other flaws which we will go into more detail in this letter, we believe that the DEIS needs to be re-written.

Comment ID: N-18744 (Page 2 of 5)

**SPECIFIC FLAWS IN THE DEIS**

- ❖ The DEIS fails to address the hundreds of scoping letters suggesting this document study alternatives that include opening up new land for OHV recreation. The document acknowledges the receipt of these comments but fails to explain why such alternatives were not included in the DEIS. } NEPA-1
- ❖ The DEIS fails to study alternatives that include opening up new OHV recreation areas to mitigate for this unprecedented loss. NEPA requires that a reasonable range of alternatives be studied. It is reasonable to study alternatives that offer new OHV recreation opportunities considering the fact that this project proposes, probably, the largest one-time loss of OHV recreation opportunity in recent history. } NEPA-2
- ❖ The DEIS fails to provide sufficient mitigation for the loss of OHV recreation area. The only recreation mitigation offered – REC 1, calls for the Marines to prepare a Recreation Management Plan which includes a recreational carrying capacity analysis that addresses recreational use, user profile, demand preference, conflicts and conditions consistent with other applicable natural resource and environmental laws. Since this plan does not mention searching for new OHV areas it can only be used to further curtail OHV use in the area remaining. Carrying capacities are utilized to figure out how many people can appropriately use an area. This study will obviously determine the amount of acceptable user for the remaining portion of Johnson Valley. In the future it is highly likely that only a certain number of users will be allowed to recreate in the area. Either way OHV recreation will be profoundly negatively impacted. The result of these impacts will be that off-roaders will recreate in other areas. Some of these areas might not be appropriate for OHV use and harmful to the environment. } REC-1
- REC-1 Simply is NOT a sufficient or effective mitigation measure. Where are all of the displaced OHV enthusiasts going to go if Johnson Valley is not an option and appropriate replacement areas are not provided? This sport is only growing and people are not going to sell their vehicles as a result of this project. Unfortunately they might recreate on lands designated as DWMA's, ACEC's or Wildernesses. The BLM and local law enforcement do not have the funding to properly enforce the restrictions in these areas. Considering our current economic state these funding issues will continue to be a problem in the foreseeable future. The only way to prevent damage to these areas is to provide new OHV lands for the displaced users. Failing to do so will most likely result in significant environmental damage to sensitive lands in San Bernardino and Riverside counties. } REC-1
- ❖ The Special Conservation Measures identified in section 2.8.1 Recreation fail to conserve OHV recreational opportunities or the surrounding the environment. The loss of an OHV recreation area of this magnitude cannot be dealt with by simply launching an education campaign and coordinating that campaign with local entities, law enforcement and user groups. Conservation, as defined by the World English Dictionary, is the act of or an instance of conserving or keeping } NEPA-3

Response to Comment N-18744 (Page 2 of 5):

NEPA-1, NEPA-2:

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

REC-1:

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

NEPA-3:

Comment noted.

Comment ID: N-18744 (Page 3 of 5)

from change, loss, injury, etc. These measures neither conserve OHV recreation or the environment. If the DEIS chose to provide replacement OHV lands then these measures would be helpful but alone they fail to conserve anything.

❖ The DEIS fails to obtain accurate data on visitor-use days for Johnson Valley. This fact makes it impossible to properly analyze the impacts to recreation and the surrounding environment. On page 4.2-1 the document states that the number they are using was obtained from the BLM and the BLM acknowledges that those numbers are not accurate and underestimate the number of visitor-use days. A new study *must* be conducted to obtain the correct number of visitor-use days. Only after that study is complete and taken into account can this document properly analyze the impacts to recreation and the environment.

❖ The DEIS fails to obtain accurate data on the economic impact OHV recreation has on the area. The study they refer to "Kroeger and Manalo 2007" uses information obtained in a study done by California State Parks OHV Division from 1994 and a study from Mohave County, AZ dated 2004. These studies do not provide accurate or up-to-date information for this document to properly analyze the economic impact of this project. An accurate and up-to-date study of the actual economic impacts OHV recreation has on the area *must* be done for the before the document can properly analyze the projects impacts.

**SPECIFIC COMMENTS/CONCERNS**

Pg. ES 31 – Table ES-4 Summary of Cumulative Impacts – Recreation – 5j

It states that there is an expected increase in demand on recreational resources now and into the future. SB 2921 and CDPA 2010 would minimize and potentially offset some recreation cumulative effects. This statement is patently false. This piece of proposed legislation simply protects the status quo. It in no way increases the area available for OHV use. The only way to mitigate for the cumulative effects of the loss of OHV recreation area is to provide new areas. The statement also doesn't take into consideration that there is no guarantee this legislation will ever be passed and made into a law.

Pg. 2-86 –92 Management of RPAA's Under Alternatives 4, 5, And 6.

This section states that CERTAIN public uses may be permitted, subject to restrictions etc... We would like to know specifically what will and won't be permitted. And what those permitting requirements and standards are going to be. Will the current BLM permitting requirements for events/races be adhered to for this new area or will the DoN create a whole new process with different requirements and standards?

Would the DoN tier off of the existing management plans for the environmental analysis (NEPA) required to put on the events that currently occur in the area? Or would there be additional environmental analysis required? If additional environmental analysis is required for these events we formally request the DoN to have that completed as part of *this* environmental analysis. It is

NEPA-3

REC-2

SOC-1

REC-3

NEPA-4

Response to Comment N-18744 (Page 3 of 5):

**REC-2:**

Section 4.2 presents the best available data on recreational use of Johnson Valley.

**SOC-1:**

The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**REC-3:**

Comment noted.

**NEPA-4, NEPA-5:**

The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

Comment ID: N-18744 (Page 4 of 5)

Response to Comment N-18744 (Page 4 of 5):

unfair to further burden this community with that requirement in light of the fact that the analysis is already part of the current management plan.

How will the exclusive military use Company Objective areas be restricted to the public while the RPAA is open to the public? Signs and posts? No fencing will be used according to page 2-91.

How will the Marines determine which two months a year the RPAA will be closed to the public? For planning purposes the OHV community would rather these dates were kept the same every year. D37 has held some events on the same date for over forty years. Having an event on a known date every year can mean the difference between having a successful event or a poorly attended one. Having a set date every year when the public cannot access the RPAA would also help in educating them about the closure. If the closure of the area changed from year to year it would be more problematic to educate the public about those closures.

NEPA-4

Pg. 2-93 -94 Permitted Uses in the RPAA

This section states - The Marine Corps would develop specific requirements and restrictions as appropriate to maximize safe and compatible use of the acquired land should one of these alternatives be selected in the Record of Decision (ROD) and implemented.

It would only be appropriate that the Marine Corps consult with the BLM and local user groups while developing these use restrictions and requirements for the RPAA.

It also states - Organized recreational events (i.e., sponsored OHV races) would require special permits. These permits would require event sponsors to obtain liability insurance related to the event and are intended to enable the Marine Corps to schedule additional public outreach efforts, provide sufficient pamphlets and information to the event organizers, and to schedule sufficient Conservation Law Enforcement Officers, and state and local law enforcement.

NEPA-5

What it doesn't explain is the process for obtaining the event/race permits and whether or not there will be a charge to the permit applicant for the processing of these permits. Will the permit applicant be charged for the military to monitor the event? Currently the BLM has a cost recovery regulation that applies to these types of permits. What type of costs associated with these events will the permit applicants be required to bear?

The costs associated with obtaining these permits is of utmost importance to D37 Off-Road. Our clubs are not for profit organizations and barely make enough money to put on their races. If the permits and costs associated with obtaining them are higher than what the BLM currently requires we will not be able to hold them, therefore rendering the remaining areas useless for our races/events.

Additionally it states - Public access to the RPAA would require each individual (or responsible adult for minors), to certify that they have completed the required public education requirement. Sponsoring adults would be responsible for supervising minors at all times. Public education would

Comment ID: N-18744 (Page 5 of 5)

be accessible through the internet or in person at the installation. In order for my organization to properly analyze the RPAA's impacts we need the following questions answered:

- A permit would be required of any member of the public who enters the RPAA, not just those that are going to recreate with or on OHV's, correct?
- Would people who enter the RPAA be required to carry the permit on their person at all times?
- How will the Marines be able to tell if a person has completed the permit process? What happens if the user could not print the permit or if they lost it on the trail?
- Will there be a separate process for minors? Or will they be required to be supervised at all times with an adult with a permit?
- At what age can a minor start obtaining their own permits 14, 16, 18?

My organization strongly believes that this document must address all of the questions I have listed about the RPAA and its management. Without this information it is unclear as to how my organization or this document can fully analyze the impacts of the project.

**CONCLUSION**

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this document. If the preferred alternative were to be adopted it would have profoundly negative effects on OHV recreation, the local economy and the environment. In order for this document to properly analyze the impacts of this project new studies must be done to obtain accurate visitor-use days and accurate economic data. The document also needs to include appropriate mitigation measures and a wider range of alternatives that include replacement lands for the unprecedented loss of OHV recreation lands. Lastly and most importantly, D37 Off-Road feels it is financially irresponsible to go forward with a project of this type considering the current economic state of our country.

Sincerely,  
  
Jerry Grabow  
President  
AMA D37 Off-Road

NEPA-5

GEN-1

Response to Comment N-18744 (Page 5 of 5):

GEN-1:

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18745 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18745  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 25, 2011

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil) *Comment Letter re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base*

*Re: Comment Letter re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base*

Dear Project Manager:

The American Motorcyclists Association District 37 ("D37") is a long-standing recreational organization based in southern California. Its [insert number] members engage in on-road and off-road recreation throughout the state; among D37's favorite venues is the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area, located to the immediate west of the USMC base at Twenty-nine Palms. For many years, D37 has held annual race events in Johnson Valley, along with other organized activities in the area. Each of these events is attended by hundreds of people, each of whom patronize local business and support the local economy to the tune of millions of dollars per year. Much of D37's recreational program is now being threatened by the proposed westward expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps base, which would remove all or most of Johnson Valley from public use. D37 opposes the base expansion project for the following reasons:

The Marines have not demonstrated a clear need for the project. That is, the Marines have not identified a serious training deficiency or a mission failure that would be addressed by the project. Instead, the Marines have simply indicated that the proposed expansion project would improve their ability to "train as they fight." This is insufficient, in light of the loss to the public in terms of recreational access and use.

PURPOSE AND NEED

To quote commandant James F. Amos, "The current and future operating environment requires an expeditionary mindset geared toward increased efficiency and reduced consumption, which will make our forces lighter and faster."

Per the March 14, 2011 report Reshaping America's Expeditionary Force in readiness, under Geostrategic Challenge, "Sea-based forces, in particular, will be invaluable deployable with a minimum of strategic lift." Sea-based forces, in particular, will be invaluable for discreet engagement activities,

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18745 (Page 1 of 2):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Comment ID: N-18745 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18745 (Page 2 of 2):

rapid crisis response, and sustainable power projections." ... "Larger than special operation forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we must be able to engage and respond quickly-often from the sea-with enough force to carry the day upon arrival." This same report recommends reduction in forces from 202,000 troops to 186,800.

Quoting Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, "The nation does not need a second land army, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time."

The U.S. Army has recently completed a large expansion of Fort Irwin, to enhance their training, they are the primary land army, not the Marines as shown by the Commandant's and Secretary's own words as well as the study quoted above

The DEIS MUST PROOVE purpose and need per NEPA. The simple statement, "...the Marine Corps has identified a need for greater reliance on MEB's..." section I.2 introduction. This is in direct contradiction with the way The Marines are currently fighting and the anticipated fighting in the upcoming decades.

NEPA-1

Sincerely,   
Donn Nay  
AMA District 37 DLO  
1820 North Naomi  
Burbank, CA 91505  
818-841-8981

Comment ID: N-18746

Comment ID: N-18746  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 The Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other_____               |

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Dianna D...\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18746:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18747

Comment ID: N-18747  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 orps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motor sports events

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18747:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID: N-18748**

Comment ID: N-18748  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Response to Comment N-18748:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Sirs!  
The expansion will be too expensive. EIS must disclose all the costs. The DOD needs to cut back. This is a good place to start. Please read and consider the attached articles and editorial.  
Thank you.  
J.D. Crow  
7905 N. Rt. 130  
Pennsauken, NJ  
08110

Comment ID: N-18749

Response to Comment N-18749:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18749  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
ning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/fas](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/fas) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>motorparts events</u>

I don't approve of the US Marine Corps land-grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the US Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to Enjoy Johnson Valley OHV.

I want all forms of motorparts to continue!!

I participate in desert racing in J.V. with my family and friends.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/fas](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/fas)

Comment ID: N-18750

Response to Comment N-18750:

Comment ID: N-18750  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Acquiring Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorsports events

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes



Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18751

Response to Comment N-18751:

Comment ID: N-18751  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**

**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Motor sports</u>

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorsports events

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18752

Response to Comment N-18752:

Comment ID: N-18752  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

U.S. Marine Corps  
Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
and Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends.

I participate in desert racing in JV OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motor sports events.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes



Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18753

Response to Comment N-18753:

Comment ID: N-18753  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Motorcarts</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motorcarts events with my family and friends.

I participate in desert racing in JV OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SARP for motorcarts events.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18754

Response to Comment N-18754:

Comment ID: N-18754  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>Motorcarts</u>

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motorcarts events with my family and friends.

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorcarts events.

\*\*\*Disaster Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail to: May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18755

Response to Comment N-18755:

Comment ID: N-18755  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/umit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/umit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u>

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorsports events.

Name Withheld by Request

1. NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail to: May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1230 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/umit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/umit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18756

Comment ID: N-18756  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement



Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                     |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motorsports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab at Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motorsports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorsports events.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail to: May 26, 2011  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18756:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18757

Comment ID: N-18757  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 orps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends.

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motorsports events.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18757:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18758

Response to Comment N-18758:

Comment ID: N-18758  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 ning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV DATE: 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation                           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources                      |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Motor sports</u> |

I don't approve of the U.S. Marine Corps' land grab of Johnson Valley OHV for training exercises.

I thank the U.S. Marine Corps for my FREEDOM, but don't take away my FREEDOM to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area's motor sports events with my family and friends

I participate in desert racing in J.V. OHV.

I want the BLM to continue issuing SRP for motor sports events

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail to: May 26, 2011 to  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS

Comment ID: N-18759

Comment ID: N-18759  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 orps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: MISSION HILLS, CA. DATE: 5/29/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources    | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

THIS IS NOTHING MORE THAN A GOVERNMENT LAND GRAB. THE U.S. MARINE CORPS DOES NOT NEED MORE LAND - CHECK CHINA LAKE THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF UNUSED LAND. FORT ORD = REOPEN GEORGE AIR BASE - USE THE THOUSANDS OF ACRES AT PENDTON. THIS SEEMS TO ME TO BE ANOTHER MANUEVER TO SLIP THE UNITED NATIONS INTO ANOTHER TAKE OVER OF AMERICAN PROPERTY. THE SILENT TREATMENT OF THE WORLD CURRENTLY CONTROL CITIZENS OF THE USA. I SAY USE THE LAND THE MARINES HAVE AT 29 PALMS. CLINTON CLOSED MANY BASES GO THERE. WE NEED OUR SPACE

1. NAME: Clinton Wilkins  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): SOFA & LIFE MEMBER NRA/IRLA  
 3. ADDRESS: 10838 ARLETA AVE MISSION HILLS CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18759:

Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the Draft EIS).

Comment ID: N-18760

Comment ID: N-18760  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 e Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Bernardino DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources    | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic          | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians appreciates the opportunity to comment on the 29 Palms EIS. The SMBMI is concerned about impact to archaeological sites, rock art sites, shelters and other cultural resources in all the alternatives. The SMBMI requests government to government consultation in the development of the ICMAP once the preferred alternative is selected. The SMBMI prefers the no action alternative.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Anthony Madrigal
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): San Manuel Band of Mission Indians
- ADDRESS: 26569 Community Center Dr  
Highland CA 92346

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please head this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18760:

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources. Section 4.11.2.4 explains that the Marine Corps would engage in consultations to address potential mitigations.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18761**

Comment ID: N-18761  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

*RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land  
Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study*

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing to you today because my family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV Area and the no action alternative is the only acceptable alternative. We spend quality family time together there away from all of the distractions of everyday life.

We visit Johnson Valley 4 times a year. When we are preparing for a trip we spend \$ 100 on gas groceries, parts, etc... in our local area. Additionally we spend \$ 100 in or around the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area during the time we are camping. We normally camp in the following areas of Johnson Valley Stoddard Wells OHV and Victorville.

The no action alternative protects my family's recreation opportunity and the economic impact it has to Southern California.

Respectfully,

Name Corey West

Address 12313 Black Horse St

Mira Loma, CA 91752

Date 5/18/2011

**Response to Comment N-18761:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18762**

Comment ID: N-18762  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land  
Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing to you today because my family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV Area and the no action alternative is the only acceptable alternative. We spend quality family time together there away from all of the distractions of everyday life.

We visit Johnson Valley 15 times a year. When we are preparing for a trip we spend \$200 on gas groceries, parts, etc... in our local area. Additionally we spend \$50 in or around the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area during the time we are camping. We normally camp in the following areas of Johnson Valley Camp Rock Rd, Bessemer Mine Rd, Boone Rd.

The no action alternative protects my family's recreation opportunity and the economic impact it has to Southern California.

Respectfully,

Name Mike Arbogast  
Address 3417 W. Chandler Bl  
Burbank, CA 91505  
Date 4/26/11

**Response to Comment N-18762:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Draft EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18763

Comment ID: N-18763  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land  
Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing to you today because my family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV Area. I strongly object to the Training Land Acquisition Project and feel the "no action" alternative is the only acceptable alternative. My family and I spend a lot of quality time in Johnson Valley and it would be a great loss if this land was restricted from public use.

We visit Johnson Valley about 15 times a year and stay for the entire weekend. When we are preparing for a trip we spend about \$150.00 on gas groceries, parts, etc in our local area. Additionally we spend about \$200.00 in or around the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area during the time we are camping. We normally camp in the following areas of Johnson Valley, Cougar Buttes, Anderson Dry Lake, North Anderson, and the Rock Pile.

The "No Action" alternative protects my family's recreation opportunity and the economic impact it has to Southern California.

Respectfully,

Name Michelle Cruz   
Address 103 E 234th Pl Carson CA 90745

Date 5/3/2011

Response to Comment N-18763:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Draft EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18764

Comment ID: N-18764  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land  
Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study

EIS Project Manager:

I am writing to you today because my family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV Area and the no action alternative is the only acceptable alternative. We spend quality family time together there away from all of the distractions of everyday life.

We visit Johnson Valley 15 times a year. When we are preparing for a trip we spend \$150 on gas, groceries, parts, etc... in our local area. Additionally we spend \$200 in or around the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area during the time we are camping. We normally camp in the following areas of Johnson Valley: Cougar Buttes, Anderson, North Anderson, Rock Rio, Honey Dew Lake, Meads Dry Lake.

The no action alternative protects my family's recreation opportunity and the economic impact it has to Southern California.

Respectfully,

Name Jared Knowles

Address 103 E. 23rd Place

Corson, CA 90745

Date 5/3/11

Response to Comment N-18764:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Draft EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18765**

Comment ID: N-18765  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Dear Project Manager,

I am writing you in regards to the 29 Palms Marine Base expansion. I am member, in good standing, of American Motorcycle Association, District 37 and So Cal MC. I feel the expansion of the base is unnecessary and will ruin a recreational area used by thousand and will also destroy the town of Lucerne.

As a member of District 37 I pass through Lucerne every time on my way to Johnson's Valley. I always stop at the local business's, whether it is the gas station or a restaurant, to spend money and support the locals. If the base is expanded and takes over Johnson's Valley there will be no reason for anyone to drive through Lucerne.

I would say that less than half the people who use Johnson's Valley are part of District 37. I know I have been coming out to Johnson's Valley long before I joined the AMA and D37. I came out with family and friends, kids, parents, brothers and sisters. These OHV areas are a way to bring everyone close to you together in one place and enjoy the sport we all love. We are loosing the land we pay our hard tax dollars every year and loosing the areas we recreate in.

I ask you to reconsider the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Base. I understand the need for training Marines and also appreciate everything the Marines do for this country. But I can not see the need for expansion, the Marines do hold vast amount land in California and the US.

Sincerely,  
Garrett Severen  
(949) 636-5057  
gseveren@yahoo.com

**Response to Comment N-18765:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Comment ID: N-18766

Response to Comment N-18766:

Comment ID: N-18766  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Barstow, CA / 29 Palms DATE: May 26, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Please do not shut down the Area(s) in question. The Financial, Recreational Impact would literally devastate a large portion of So. Calif.'s economy!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Allen J. Lee

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): Wolf Motorsports LLC

3. ADDRESS: 2 Hermitage Ln. Ca. 92660  
949 922 5467 ffoldawa@cox.net

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18767

Response to Comment N-18767:

To whom it may concern:

Comment ID: N-18767  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Regarding the proposed expansion of the Marine Base into the Johnson Valley "Offroad Reserve" I have seen and heard the aggressive and often hostile attitudes of an alarming percentage of offroaders (who seem to regard themselves as valiant reclaimers of frontier freedom). Assurances that offroad incursions into illegal and unwelcoming areas will be minimal, are unrealistic in the extreme. The prevailing conditions of Code Enforcement are disarmingly inadequate. Because they can invade with relative impunity, they will do it. My adamant opposition to the Johnson Valley plan is not a reflection of disrespect for the needs of the Marine Corp.; but rather, a gut level despair at the prospect of losing the most loved qualities of the place my wife and I chose to spend the remaining years of our lives (she is no longer with me). I will not leave this place. Could not leave it if I wanted to. These closing lines have the resonance of a comically pathetic outcry, but... well... they are what they are.

Sincerely,  
Wes Torgerson  
82975 Sullivan Rd.  
29 Palms ca 92277  
(12 miles east of "29")

May 25, 2011

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Comment ID: N-18768

Comment ID: N-18768  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Marcos DATE: 25 May 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |

Dear Sir or Madam,

*My concerns lie primarily with the loss of public lands that this proposal will cause. As a Marine myself I understand the need for areas to train, I have actually been trained up at 29 Palms myself. However I don't feel that taking a large tract of OHV accessible land is the answer. My family recreates on that land and the company I work for is in the off road industry, both would be negatively affected. There is very little land available for off highway vehicle use, the loss of Johnson Valley seems unnecessarily painful.*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18768:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Comment ID: N-18769

Response to Comment N-18769:

Comment ID: N-18769  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
**Corps**  
**Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson valley OHV DATE: 5/25/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*My family & I have been enjoying the Johnson valley OHV area for about six years. We use the area for camping, OHV trucks, motorcycles/dirt bikes & quads. We enjoy the diversity of the area including the hammocks, dry lake beds, sand dunes & general desert areas. We have found memories of this area & have met wonderful friends there. To close down this area to public use / OHV use would be a tragedy for the OHV community. I urge you to reconsider closing the area & leaving it free to public use as it is now.  
 Thank you for your consideration in this matter.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Patricia Rose Kirby
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 1864 W. Nutwood Pl  
Anaheim, CA 92804

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18770

Comment ID: N-18770  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: LUCERNE Valley DATE: 11/25/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise           | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources            |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

I have a broken print of it (could be)  
 This page completely. I had to print it on a  
 Register. I have a family & friends that have  
 concerns. This is what I know my family  
 & I. I thank in advance for letting me keep  
 my sanity by keeping this little bit of peace  
 on earth open.  
 May God BLESS YOU in making  
 the right decision

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Patsy M C Gentry
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 338 Liddley Drive  
Porterville CA 93257

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18770:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18771**

Comment ID: N-18771  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMISSION

Name Withheld by Request

TO: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132 – 5190

Dear Sir:

Please include me on the mailing list and send me updates about the EIS.

Withhold my name and address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

COMMENT

I am an owner of valid mining claims in the exploration and development of a heavy minerals and precious metals deposit within Sections 3 and 4, Township 4 North Range 3 East S.B.B.M. and Sections 27, 28, 29, 32, 33 and 34, Township 5 North Range 3 East S.B.B.M..

This extensive and valuable deposit should be reserved as an excepted area if in future it is included within the boundary of any withdrawal of public lands for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment Project.

The full operation of the public land laws and Federal regulations relating to conservation, utilization and development of mineral resources must be allowed to continue toward the future production of precious and strategic metals and mineral commodities contained within this significant deposit.

Very truly yours,

/s/

**Response to Comment N-18771:**

Thank you for your comment. As indicated in Section 2.6 of the EIS, under the proposed action mining claim owners would be offered fair market value for their claims, or would be afforded reasonable access to their claims. Decisions on whether to purchase a mining claim, or provide access to the claim, would be made on a case-by-case basis. The location of the mining claim relative to MEB training locations would determined whether a mining claim is to be purchased or reasonable access provided. Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list as requested.

**Comment ID: N-18772**

Comment ID: N-18772  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

PUBLIC COMMENT SUBMISSION

Name Withheld by Request

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Dear Sir:

Please include me on the mailing list and send me updates about the EIS.

Withhold my name and address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

COMMENT

I am an owner of valid mining claim Orchid Placer No. 1 in Sections 21 and 28, Township 6 North Range 4 East S.B.B.M. The claim is being developed for precious and base metals and decorative stone.

This mining claim should be reserved as an excepted area if in the future it is included within the boundary of any withdrawal of public lands for the 29 Palms Proposed Training Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment Project.

The full operation of the public land laws and Federal regulations relating to conservation, utilization and development of mineral resources must be allowed to continue for the valuable metals and commodities contained within this mining claim.

Very truly yours,

/s  
Dated: May 26, 2011.

**Response to Comment N-18772:**

Thank you for your comment. As indicated in Section 2.6 of the EIS, under the proposed action mining claim owners would be offered fair market value for their claims, or would be afforded reasonable access to their claims. Decisions on whether to purchase a mining claim, or provide access to the claim, would be made on a case-by-case basis. The location of the mining claim relative to MEB training locations would be determined whether a mining claim is to be purchased or reasonable access provided. Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list as requested.

**Comment ID: N-18773**

Comment ID: N-18773  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

NATIONAL CHLORIDE COMPANY OF AMERICA  
P.O. BOX 504, NORWALK, CALIFORNIA

May 26, 2011

Operations  
Bristol Dry Lake  
12121 Amboy Road  
Amboy, CA 92304

NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING COMMAND  
29 Palms EIS MANAGER  
1220 Pacific Ave  
San Diego, CA 92132

Ref: Responding to your Land Acquisition Study

SIR:

Your public meetings in 2010 advised that we and others would probably learn conclusions on this subject on or before the summer of 2011. While we have received no information whatever from you since those meetings, the recent newspaper publicity asking for "final comments" makes us feel we should state our case once again concerning your possible move in our direction.

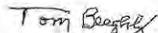
Accordingly, it is our belief your intended expansion should not be to the East. In our 61 years of operating on Bristol Dry Lake it is our opinion that this area could have no value for military training. Rather it would be a liability, due to its size and uselessness in bad weather.

It should be noted here that Bristol Dry Lake is the important western source for the valuable mineral, calcium chloride, and a military occupation would remove it from industry, as well as probably cause three mineral companies to go out of business.

An eastward expansion would certainly jeopardize the existence of Amboy Road, which is a vital highway for commerce and tourism to this area.

The above is offered for your Study, respectfully.

National Chloride Company  
of America

  
Tom Beeghly, President

**Response to Comment N-18773:**

Thank you for your comment. As indicated in Section 2.6 of the EIS, under the proposed action mining claim owners would be offered fair market value for their claims, or would be afforded reasonable access to their claims. Decisions on whether to purchase a mining claim, or provide access to the claim, would be made on a case-by-case basis. The location of the mining claim relative to MEB training locations would determined whether a mining claim is to be purchased or reasonable access provided. As described in Section 2.6 of the EIS, under Alternatives 1, 2, and 6, Morris Lode and Bessemer mines would be acquired.

The EIS has been updated to discuss mineral resources of the east study area as suggested.

Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list as requested.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18774

Comment ID: N-18774  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley (Resort) DATE: 5/30/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

*Many people recreate here during different times of the year. It is not snow appropriate for bicycles and ATVs. None of the terrain is torn up or abused. Higher elevation speed racing along with campfires and walking are very popular. It is enjoyed by all who come. So hopefully the Marine Corp will consider this plea to keep it open.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Marilyn Bieler
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 2545 Fulton Ave #1 Sacramento, Ca 95821

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18774:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID: N-18775**

Comment ID: N-18775  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,



54999 MARTINEZ TRAIL # 25  
YUCCA VALLEY, CA 92284

**Response to Comment N-18775:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18776

Comment ID: N-18776  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Mining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley ORA DATE: 5/26/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

My husband and I are currently interested in purchasing an off road vehicle for the Johnson Valley ORA. We've ~~also~~ enjoyed visiting the off road events for several years.

If this area is closed, we will have no reason to purchase an off road vehicle.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Janet Brace
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 58163 Alta Mesa Dr.  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18776:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18777

Response to Comment N-18777:

Comment ID: N-18777  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Johnson Valley ORV AREA DATE: 5/25/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Please keep AREA OPEN.

WIFE + I WANT TO BUY AN OFF ROAD VEHICLE. JOHNSON VALLEY IS ONLY 20 MINUTES AWAY FROM OUR HOME. WE ARE HAVING 2ND THOUGHTS ABOUT IT. IF THE AREA CLOSES WE WOULD HAVE TO TRAVEL TO FAR TO ANOTHER AREA.

WE ALL NEED GOOD SPACE TO GET AWAY FROM OUR DAILY STRESS.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Ted Phillips

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 58163 ALTA MEA DR  
YUCCA VALLEY CA 92284

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92152-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Comment ID: N-18778

Comment ID: N-18778  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

GREG ROGERS  
(owner of) ACE ALTERNATORS  
THE LOSS OF Johnson Valley would  
Greatly affect our Business and  
THE Economy in Yucca Valley and  
Lucerne Valley  
Gregory A Rogers

Response to Comment N-18778:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18779

Comment ID: N-18779  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/ias) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Ontario DATE: 5/25/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Means Dry Lake Bed is the most essential location for the sport of rock crawling and off-road racing. Events are held here year round and offer fun and recreation for families as well as competition for our sport. This is the largest remaining off road area in Southern California. I hope that in the future, our enthusiasts will be able to use this area for future generations. This is a "minority" sport to some, but each year there are over thirty thousand people who come to view the King of the Hammers race as well as other events. Johnson Valley must be preserved for off-road use!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Heather Littlefield

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 2346 S San Antonio Ave Pomona, CA 91766

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Response to Comment N-18779:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18780

Response to Comment N-18780:

Comment ID: N-18780  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 05-15-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

Please do not expand west or not at all period!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Georgia Turner

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: P.O. Box 486, 32111 Emerald Rd  
Lucerne Valley, Lucerne Valley CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18781

Comment ID: N-18781  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

\* Joshua Trees are protected, mortar shells tend to destroy these, also very noisy.

\* FT CARSON, Co. 1970's: A young paper boy wandered on to the firing range, put an unexploded mortar shell in his newspaper bag, the shell detonated, killing him instantly. There are many individuals that will try to salvage metals for monies, putting them in jeopardy, for health & safety.

\* This is a "Recreational Area", taking this away will hurt many.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Frank Gregory Quinones sr.

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: PO BOX 1881  
Lucerne Valley Ca 92356-1881

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18781 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. Joshua trees have been mapped on the Combat Center, within the extreme southwestern corner in Sand Hill Training. Joshua trees have not been mapped in the west study area, but biological surveys for rare plants have noted that they are present. The Marine Corps would attempt to avoid intact stands of Joshua tree during exercise design and conduct of military training, consistent with the goal of conserving natural resources as proscribed in the Combat Center INRMP. However, Joshua trees are not protected under federal law, and state and local regulations would not apply to the proposed project.

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to public safety. Please see Section 3.4.3.1 of the text for information on "scrapers" and the current procedures used by the base under Ground Training Operations.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is

**Response to Comment N-18781 (Page 2 of 2):**

selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS). The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

Comment ID: N-18782

Response to Comment N-18782:

Comment ID: N-18782  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Naval Facilities Engineering Command**  
**Naval Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**

**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA DATE: 5-24-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

PLEASE CONSIDER OPTION 3 BY SPANISH TO THE EAST. THIS WILL ALLOW THE MARINES THE AREA THEY NEED WITH NO IMPACT ON THE LOCAL BUSINESS AND CONTINUE TO ALLOW FULL OHV USE.

---

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: GARY CREVELING

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 11821 MAGNOLIA ST. GARDEN GROVE, CA. 92841

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18783

Response to Comment N-18783:

Comment ID: N-18783  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Johnson Valley OHV Area      DATE: May 24, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

Please consider Option 3 - Expansion to the East as this would preserve the OHV use of the area, would not impact the local business owners and still provide the area needed by our military. Thank you for considering our input.

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\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Floy Cleveling

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 11821 Magnolia St.  
Garden Grove CA 92841

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?     No     Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18784**

Comment ID: N-18784  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Dear EIS Project Manager:

First of all, thank you for considering this letter. I fully support our military, its leaders, and the wonderful men and women who fight to secure our freedoms in this country. I am grateful every day for the freedoms I enjoy because of the sacrifice by those who serve. One of the greatest freedoms I enjoy is off road driving and extreme rock crawling. Right now, our freedom of four-wheeling and our military are in conflict, because one of the world's most popular OHV park is in danger of closure for use as a tactical training ground; Johnson Valley OHV park.

My solution, for the benefit of both our military and the vast community of off road enthusiasts, is to expand eastward and/or southward, as outlined in Alternative #3. To me, this Alternative provides the best solution and the easiest to implement for both the Marine Corps, the off road community, and many other groups.

If an eastward and/or southward expansion is simply not possible, Alternative #4 or Alternative #5 would be acceptable, to allow full off road recreation access to Johnson Valley when it is not in use by our Marines.

If even this is not acceptable, the very least alternative I would consider is the favored Alternative #6 BUT with more permitted access northward to include the Outer Limits extreme 4x4 trail, and the access and exit roads. This way, all of the very popular trails remain intact and accessible.

If at all possible, an eastward and southward expansion is acceptable to me, as well as many others. I feel, and I am sure many others would agree, that a permit (which allows access to Johnson Valley 10 months of the year) is only a temporary solution, and a permanent closure and restricted access would be inevitable. Thank you for regarding my input.

Sincerely,

Dillon W Douglas  
7447 CHERRYBEE TRL  
JOHNSON VALLEY, CA 92284  
Dillon W Douglas

**Response to Comment N-18784:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18785

Comment ID: N-18785  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 8 May 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources    | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources          | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development            | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

Moving closer to Lucerne Valley and taking away your recreation areas will kill our town's revenue from the racers and off roaders. Please pick another area that's not used.

- \*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*
- NAME: William Sumrall
  - ORGANIZATION (if applicable):
  - ADDRESS: 10054 Baker Rd - Lucerne Valley CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18785:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18786

Comment ID: N-18786  
Date Received: May 31, 2011  
Marine Corps  
Joint Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Luxerne Valley CA DATE: 05/26/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other         |

I feel that taking the land away is a very bad idea. There is thousands of people that come thru the town of Luxerne valley (with a population of around 700). Most of the population is low income families & without the people we will be worse than we are. Also there is nothing to do in our town & no money to go out of town, that I'm sure im not the only one to consider that what we need as my backyard. Everyone comes here to see the land & that the only thing we have is that land. I also believe that there is historical land marks in that area as well. I want there to be an r'n land around here that they could put it somewhere else where it will not be effecting so many people & things.  
Please reconsider another area please!!!

1. NAME: Abantele Le Vite  
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):  
3. ADDRESS: Luxerne valley CA 92356

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18786:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18787 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18787  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: So Carme Valley, CA DATE: 5-21-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation            |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources           |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                     |

*I am highly against this expansion for many reasons. First of all we don't need bombs going off that close to where we live and play. It's not good for the environment or the animals and plant life. What will happen to people who live way out in Johnson Valley? Not to mention that we have petting farms and indian artifacts all over out there that are thousands of years old. Also, we love the trails for recreation and would lose it terribly. PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE*

*Bombing area. They have enough land to bomb already!*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):  
 3. ADDRESS:

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18787 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As described in Section 2.8 of the EIS, under any action alternative the Marine Corps would implement a variety of measures to avoid and minimize impacts to Cultural Resources. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion

**Comment ID: N-18787 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18787 (Page 2 of 2):**

task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18788

Comment ID: N-18788  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Vly. ca. DATE: 5-21-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation                       |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                              |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources                  |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>loss of desert life</u> |

*- To lose more of an open land riding  
 land and our town to where there's no where  
 to camp, ride, or enjoy the desert like  
 we have been and have grown up with  
 is a shame and unnecessary.  
 People live here that's not home and  
 already there are so many more  
 regulations than when I grew up.  
 Thank you for your concern  
 Sincerely  
 Che Anderson*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Che A Anderson
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): N/A
- ADDRESS: 51220 Bulrush Rd, Lucerne Vly. ca. 92556

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18788:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18789

Comment ID: N-18789  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Drps  
 ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley DATE: 5/23/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation              |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources         |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other <u>Land Value</u> |

We support our military and understand training needs. However moving west toward Lucerne Valley is not in anyone's best interest. While I have studied the reasons I can't agree on a lot of the reasons in general, but this community does not need this use of land making in optics. Perhaps it would be the right thing to do to consider the loss of land value farming offered use which helps the town survive and is family used. This would be a disaster to ~~our town~~ and ~~therefore~~ we fight it.

1. NAME: Jeanne Lane  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):  
 3. ADDRESS: 33677 Sunrise Lucerne Valley  
92336

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Please go east!!!

Response to Comment N-18789:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As indicated in Section 2.6 of the EIS, under the proposed action mining claim owners would be offered fair market value for their claims, or would be afforded reasonable access to their claims. Decisions on whether to purchase a mining claim, or provide access to the claim, would be made on a case-by-case basis. The location of the mining claim relative to MEB training locations would be determined whether a mining claim is to be purchased or reasonable access provided.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18790

Comment ID: N-18790  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment



ENVIRONMENTAL Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: LUCERNE VALLEY, CA DATE: 5/23/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____                |

While I support our Armed forces 100% I believe the main Corp base should be expanded to the EAST, NOT WEST TOWARDS LUCERNE VALLEY WE ENJOY A QUIET PEACEFUL RANCH SETTING AND WE WANT IT TO STAY THAT WAY. NOISE FROM MUNITIONS TRAINING, TARGET PRACTICE IS SOMETHING WE DO NOT WANT IN OUR BACKYARD

I AM ALSO CONCERNED A WESTWARD EXPANSION WOULD ELIMINATE A GREAT DEAL OF OFF ROAD RECREATION. OUR TOWN DEPENDS ON OUT OF TOWN BUSINESS TO SURVIVE. I NEED MY JOB! PLEASE GO EAST!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: CRAG V. STEVENS
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: 33677 SUNRISE, LUCERNE VALLEY, CA 92358

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18790:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18791

Response to Comment N-18791:

Comment ID: N-18791  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 The Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources            | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal               | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

I NEVER THOUGHT I WOULD SEE THE DAY THAT OUR OWN MARINES WOULD RUN THEIR OWN COUNTRY MEN & WOMAN OFS THE PROPERTIES THAT THEY OWN ALL THREE YEARS THEY ARE TOO OLD TO START OVER

A TEAR DOWN A TOWN THAT HAS BENT OVER BACKWARDS TO SUPPORT THE MARINES

4 TAKE AWAY A PLAYGROUND THAT HAS SERVED FOR THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE! DON'T DO THIS! \*\*\*Please Print\*\*\* DON'T DO THIS!

- NAME: KENNETH M. PIERZONA
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): PRESIDENT OF C.B.C.
- ADDRESS: PO BOX 2288 LA. 92306

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18792 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18792  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                           | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic                  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics     |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals                     | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation                |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources               |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>TOURISM/ECONOMY</u> |

THE MARINE CORPS EXPANSION SHOULD NOT BE EVEN CONSIDERED FOR EXPANSION TOWARD LUCERNE VALLEY. IF THIS OCCURS THE ECONOMY OF LUCERNE VALLEY WILL BE DESTROYED. THE DRV SITE OF LUCERNE VALLEY/JOHNSON VALLEY WILL NO LONGER EXIST - THIS TOURISM SUPPORTS THE ECONOMY IN THIS REGION. PROPERTY VALUES WILL BE DESTROYED. NOISE & DESTRUCTION OF OUR PEACEFUL LIFESTYLE WILL BE DESTROYED. THE MARINE CORPS HAS NEVER EXPLAINED WHY THEY WANT TO COME HERE. THE EXPANSION SHOULD BE TOWARD THE EAST - TOWARD THE OPEN DESERT EAST TO THE COLORADO RIVER. THAT MAKES SENSE. THE EXPANSION AND FUTURE EXPANSIONS WOULD BE BARELY NOTICED & CAUSE NO PROBLEMS FOR CITIZENS. EXPLANATION REQUEST.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: PATRICIA PIERZINA
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): CITIZENS FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY, INC.
3. ADDRESS: PO Box 2288 / 33205 AZURITE RD  
LUCERNE VALLEY, CA 92350

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92134-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18792 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated

**Comment ID: N-18792 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18792 (Page 2 of 2):**

to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18793

Response to Comment N-18793:

Comment ID: N-18793  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 41,000 BLOCK EAST 810 RD, LIVERME VALLEY DATE: 5-17-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

OUR COMPANY ALSO WILL BE THE ANNOYANT OF TRAFFIC & NOISE NEARBY. IF I HAD KNOWIN OF THIS EXPANSION I WOULD HAVE NOT BOUGHT A HOME HERE, WE MOVED HERE FOR THE PEACE & QUIET MY HOME VALUE WILL DROP & I WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO SELL IT OR LIVE HERE PEACEFULLY.

Name Withheld by Request

1. NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The EIS evaluates impacts to transportation under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.6). Under alternatives that acquire land in the west acquisition study area, the EIS determined that marginal temporary traffic increases on Highway 247 due to MEB mobilization would not create significant impacts.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18794

Comment ID: N-18794  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Engineering Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 41,000 BLOCK EAST END RD - LU DATE: 5-17-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

*OUR CONCERN ALSO WILL BE THE AMOUNT OF TRAFFIC & NOISE NEARBY. IF I HAD KNOWN OF THIS EXPANSION I WOULD HAVE NOT HAD TO BUY A NEW HOME HERE. MY HOME VALUE WILL DROP & I WON'T EVER BE ABLE TO SELL IT OR LIVE HERE PEACEFULLY.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18794:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The EIS evaluates impacts to transportation under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.6). Under alternatives that acquire land in the west acquisition study area, the EIS determined that marginal temporary traffic increases on Highway 247 due to MEB mobilization would not create significant impacts.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18795

Comment ID: N-18795  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice              | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals         | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                              | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety           | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

USE Fort Irwin Land!

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

- \*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*
- NAME: Steven Neubaues
  - ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
  - ADDRESS: 2091 Trinity Ave  
Barstow Ca 92311

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18795:

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

Comment ID: N-18796

Comment ID: N-18796  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
ing Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
ENVIRONMENTAL Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Lucerne valley DATE: 5/26/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

*Recreation in the areas surrounding Lucerne valley is a major source of income for local businesses, as people traveling through the area stop and purchase services and goods. Limiting these recreational areas would be a huge blow to the local economy. In addition, families in the area have also taken part in enjoying the desert, and it would be a shame for that to no longer be possible.*

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Elaise Bush

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 11180 Post Office Rd. Lucerne valley CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5180  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18796:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Comment ID: N-18797

Response to Comment N-18797:

Comment ID: N-18797  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, BlueRibbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18798

Response to Comment N-18798:

Comment ID: N-18798  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Yucca Valley DATE: 5-26-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                               |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

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San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18799

Response to Comment N-18799:

Comment ID: N-18799  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Yucca Valley DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Bueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18800

Comment ID: N-18800  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yuca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a No-Action Alternative for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a No-Action Alternative!!!!

Name Withheld by Request

1. NAME \_\_\_\_\_

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18800:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18801

Comment ID: N-18801  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 palms DATE: 5/26/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Joseph Ramirez

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 63728 Grace Rd Joshua Tree CA 92252

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18801:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18802

Response to Comment N-18802:

Comment ID: N-18802  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms, CA DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Colette M. Easter

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 6933 Manzanita Ave  
29 Palms, CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)? [ ] No [ ] Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18803

Response to Comment N-18803:

Comment ID: N-18803  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: May-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a ~~No-Action Alternative~~ for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep the airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a ~~No-Action Alternative!!!!~~

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

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Comment ID: N-18804

Response to Comment N-18804:

Comment ID: N-18804  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: 29 Palms CA DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality          | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic            | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                               |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a ~~No-Action Alternative~~ for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a ~~No-Action Alternative!!!!~~

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Robert Carter
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable)
- ADDRESS: 73211 Adonis Circle 29 Palms CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18805

Response to Comment N-18805:

Comment ID: N-18805  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Row Smith

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 72558 TWO MILE  
29 PALMS CA 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18806

Comment ID: N-18806  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                               |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Ted Belisle
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 7656 Bedouin ave 29 palms Ca. 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18806:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18807

Comment ID: N-18807  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 PALMS DATE: 5/26/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yuca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)? [ ] No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

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1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18807:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18808

Response to Comment N-18808:

Comment ID: N-18808  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Naval Facilities Engineering Command**  
**Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**

**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley CA DATE: 5-24-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I've lived in Lucerne Valley since 1966  
and the weekenders have always been in our  
stores, gas stations, restaurants.  
I love our deserts. I have a Jeep 4x4  
we enjoy our time out there these days  
and America is losing everything (DON'T TAKE  
OUR DESERT FOR REC) and our (LUCRY HOOD)  
you take the weekenders away you take our  
TOWN INCOME!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Harold Hite

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 9188 mesa rd Lucerne Valley CA.

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18809

Response to Comment N-18809:

Comment ID: N-18809  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
Naval Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment



Naval Facilities Engineering Command  
Naval Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: Lucerne Valley CA DATE: 5-25-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources            |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

My Family 4x4's out there where you plan to take. We have many art/fau petro cliffs, mining, old iron towers and most of all we have (off road trails)

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: ANNA OLIVAS
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 32545 SUTHER RD LUCERNE VALLEY CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Comment ID: N-18810

Comment ID: N-18810  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 Corps  
 Planning Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Lucerne Valley CA DATE: 5-24-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |   |
|--|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation      |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation             |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources            |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                      |

ITS A PLACE TO TAKE MY FAMILY FOR QUALITY  
TIME, A THING THATS BECOMING A THING OF  
THE PAST.

(Take the weekenders and our town)  
will slowly Die!!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Kathy Hite
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable):
- ADDRESS: 9188 Mesa RD Lucerne Valley CA.

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18810:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Draft EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the Draft EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18811

Comment ID: N-18811  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**

**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5/26/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a No-Action Alternative for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a No-Action Alternative!!!!

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Tom Conroy

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 4753 Hicktree RD 29 Palms CA 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18811:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18812

Response to Comment N-18812:

Comment ID: N-18812  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: May 24, 2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Ashley Berlinger

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable)

3. ADDRESS: 85501 Highland Trail Yucca Valley  
CA 92284

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18813

Comment ID: N-18813  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
ining Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: 29 Palms, CA DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yuca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Jerry C. Foster
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: 6933 Manzanita Ave  
29 Palms, Ca 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)? [ ] No [ ] Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18813:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18814

Comment ID: N-18814  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |  |   |   |
|--|---|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development                    | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|  | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Emily Robison
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: PO Box 38  
29 Palms CA. 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18814:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18815

Response to Comment N-18815:

Comment ID: N-18815  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yuca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Martie Avels

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable)

3. ADDRESS: PO Box 38  
29 Palms, CA. 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18816

Response to Comment N-18816:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18816  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Meghan Avels

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: PO Box 38  
29 Palms CA, 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Comment ID: N-18817

Comment ID: N-18817  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms Ca. DATE: 5/26/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: DAWN BENTON

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) District 37, AMA,

3. ADDRESS: 73782 DESERT DRIVE 29 Palms Ca. 92217

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18817:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18818

Response to Comment N-18818:

Comment ID: N-18818  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

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LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Kurt Wellock

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable)

3. ADDRESS: 6512 COOTILLO 29 Palms CA

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18819

Comment ID: N-18819  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement



Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

\_\_\_\_\_  
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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18819:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.



Comment ID: N-18821

Comment ID: N-18821  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA

DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18821:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18822

Comment ID: N-18822  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18822:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18823

Comment ID: N-18823  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 e Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement



Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18823:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.





**Comment ID: N-18826**

Comment ID: N-18826  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Marine Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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*\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.*

Name Withheld by Request

- NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

**Response to Comment N-18826:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18827

Comment ID: N-18827  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA

DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

- \*\*\*\*\*
1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18827:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.



Comment ID: N-18829

Response to Comment N-18829:

Comment ID: N-18829  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**  
**Final Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Bill MORGAN

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: 5965 Cabuilla Ave  
29 Palms CA 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18830

Comment ID: N-18830  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps**  
**Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment**

**ENVIRONMENTAL Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 5-26-11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

\_\_\_\_\_ I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blue Ribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please keep air airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Jamie Avels

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: PO Box 38  
29 Palms CA. 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18830:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18831

Response to Comment N-18831:

Comment ID: N-18831  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

**Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Final Impact Statement**

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**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: 29 Palms DATE: 4 MAY 26

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other

I agree with letters and comments that I have read from the associations listed and I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca., Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 OHV highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a **No-Action Alternative** for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition.

Please keep are airspace and all of our BLM public lands totally and completely open for the public to use and enjoy. Again I chose a **No-Action Alternative!!!!**

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Dawn Benton

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable)

3. ADDRESS: 73224 Adobe Circle  
29 Palms, CA 92277

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18832

Comment ID: N-18832  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18832:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.





Comment ID: N-18835

Comment ID: N-18835  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011  
 1e Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

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\*\*\*Diseno Defect\*\*\*  
 1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request  
 2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_  
 3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18835:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18836

Response to Comment N-18836:

Comment ID: N-18836  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
 Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
 Environmental Impact Statement

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

<input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice	<input type="checkbox"/> Public services
<input type="checkbox"/> Air quality	<input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation
<input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic	<input type="checkbox"/> Land use	<input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics
<input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals	<input type="checkbox"/> Transportation
<input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Noise	<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure
<input type="checkbox"/> Energy development	<input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Water resources
	<input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal	<input type="checkbox"/> Other_____

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

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\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request

2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_

3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before **May 26, 2011** to:

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18837

Comment ID: N-18837  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

Name Withheld by Request

1. NAME: \_\_\_\_\_
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18837:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.



Comment ID: N-18839

Comment ID: N-18839  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement



Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18839:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18840

Comment ID: N-18840  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
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 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18840:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18841

Comment ID: N-18841  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Name Withheld by Request
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable): \_\_\_\_\_
- ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18841:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18842

Comment ID: N-18842  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA

DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):
3. ADDRESS:

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18842:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.



Comment ID: N-18844

Response to Comment N-18844:

Comment ID: N-18844  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement



Public Meeting Comment Form

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA

DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other.....               |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Derek Uyano
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable) Alpha Fire Sprinkler Corp/Alpha Fire & Security Alarm
- ADDRESS: 650 Sweeney Lane San Luis Obispo, Ca. 93401

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

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 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
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 San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
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Comment ID: N-18845

Response to Comment N-18845:

Comment ID: N-18845  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Marine Corps  
Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

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\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable):
3. ADDRESS:

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[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

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Comment ID: N-18846

Comment ID: N-18846  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



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Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement

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LOCATION: San Luis Obispo, CA DATE: 05/03/11

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

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|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Recreation    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input type="checkbox"/> Land use                   | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____              |

\*Recommend alternative 3- No action.

1. NAME: Name Withheld by Request
2. ORGANIZATION (if applicable) \_\_\_\_\_
3. ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

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[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

Response to Comment N-18846:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18847 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18847  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

STATE OF CALIFORNIA  
EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION  
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South  
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202



CURTIS L. FOSSUM, Executive Officer  
(916) 574-1800 FAX (916) 574-1810  
California Relay Service From TDD Phone 1-800-735-2929  
from Voice Phone 1-800-735-2922

Contact Phone: (916) 574-1890  
Contact FAX: (916) 574-1885

May 26, 2011

File Ref: SD # 2008-09-17.1

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

**Subject: Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study Contiguous to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, San Bernardino County**

Dear Sir or Madam:

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) staff has reviewed the subject EIS for 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study (Project), which is being prepared by the Department of the Navy (DON) as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.). The CSLC has prepared these comments because of its jurisdiction over portions of the Project located on state school lands as well as its trust responsibility for any and all projects that could directly or indirectly affect state owned "sovereign" land and/or school lands, and their resources or uses (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines<sup>1</sup> §§ 15381, 15386, subd. (b)).

The EIS is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed establishment of a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California (the "Combat Center") to accommodate Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) training. To implement the proposed action, the Marine Corps would acquire additional land adjacent to the Combat Center, establish and modify military Special Use Airspace (SUA) above the proposed MEB-sized training range, and conduct specified MEB training.

**CSLC Jurisdiction**

In 1853, the United States Congress granted to California hundreds of thousands of acres of land for the specific purpose of supporting public schools. In 1984, the State Legislature passed the School Land Bank Act (Act), which established the School Land Bank Fund (SLBF) and appointed the CSLC as its trustee (Pub. Resources Code § 8700 et seq.). The Act directed the CSLC to develop school lands into a permanent

<sup>1</sup> The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

Response to Comment N-18847 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has met with the State of California to discuss CEQA requirements for state actions that could be undertaken following the project decision. State agencies are encouraged to use NEPA documents when such documents comply with CEQA. To the extent practicable, the EIS has incorporated CEQA requirements to allow state agencies to utilize the EIS analysis to support any future project-specific analyses that may be required by CEQA.

Comment ID: N-18847 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18847 (Page 2 of 3):

29 Palms EIS Project Manager

Page 2

May 26, 2011

and productive resource base for revenue generating purposes. The CSLC manages approximately 469,000 acres of school lands held in fee ownership by the State and the reserved mineral interests on an additional 790,000± acres where the surface estates have been sold. Revenue from school lands is deposited in the State Treasury for the benefit of the Teachers' Retirement Fund (Pub. Resources Code § 6217.5).

On January 27, 2009, CSLC staff submitted comments in response to the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS. In order to determine the State's interest in the Project, CSLC staff requested a more detailed map showing exactly where the proposed Project would be located. Based on information contained on the maps provided to the CSLC by Project representatives, staff has identified more than 8,000 acres of fee-owned school lands within the areas analyzed in the EIS (including all alternatives), and an additional, 15,000± acres of lands with reserved mineral interests. This conclusion is without prejudice to any future assertion of State ownership or public rights, should circumstances change, or should additional information become available. This letter is not intended, nor should it be construed as, a waiver or limitation of any right, title, or interest of the State of California in any lands under its jurisdiction.

Because the Project would involve the use of school lands, the DON would need to purchase the identified school lands from the CSLC at fair-market value. The sale of these lands would require approval by the CSLC at a properly noticed public meeting, and as a discretionary action, would also require the CSLC to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code § 21000 et seq.). The CEQA Guidelines provide a mechanism by which an EIS can be used by an approving agency if specified conditions are met (see generally §§ 15220-15225). In early 2009, CSLC staff and Project representatives discussed the CSLC's obligations under CEQA. As part of these discussions, Project representatives indicated that the EIS would meet CEQA requirements. CSLC staff has reviewed the EIS for compliance with the conditions set forth in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and offers the following comments.

Circulation of Documents:

Pursuant to section 15225 of the CEQA Guidelines, the CSLC may only use the EIS in place of an Environmental Impact Report if the federal lead agency circulated the EIS in accordance with CEQA and gave notice of the document's availability as specified in section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. Because the CSLC is a state agency, when it acts as a lead agency under CEQA, it is required to circulate environmental documents through the State Clearinghouse at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. For the Project EIS, CSLC staff has been unable to verify that the DON gave such notice; therefore, prior to the DON's approval of the Project and before the CSLC can use the EIS to consider approval of the sale of school lands for the Project, the EIS will need to be noticed and circulated in accordance with CEQA requirements. Please contact the CSLC staff identified below for further assistance in meeting this requirement.

NEPA-1

Comment ID: N-18847 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18847 (Page 3 of 3):

29 Palms EIS Project Manager

Page 3

May 26, 2011

Staff of the CSLC appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the EIS for the proposed Project and looks forward to further communication from the DON regarding the purchase of school lands and the CSLC's CEQA compliance obligations. Please contact Jim Porter, Public Land Management Specialist, at 916-574-1865 or by email at [jim\\_porter@slc.ca.gov](mailto:jim_porter@slc.ca.gov), for information concerning the management, leasing, and sale of state school lands. If you have any questions concerning the environmental review, please contact Ben Lichy, Environmental Scientist, at (916) 574-1891 or by e-mail at [lichyb@slc.ca.gov](mailto:lichyb@slc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Cy R. Oggins, Chief  
Division of Environmental Planning  
and Management

cc: Office of Planning and Research  
LMD, CSLC  
DEPM, CSLC

Comment ID: N-18848 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18848  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

[https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms\\_DEIS/Comments.aspx](https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms_DEIS/Comments.aspx)

To Whom It May Concern:

I have invested tens of thousands of dollars in off road riding machinery, safety equipment, tow vehicles, living quarters and the like. The only place within 2 hours driving time in my 6 mpg motorhome is Johnson Valley.

I am retired and on a fixed income and I vote in every election. I am a personal friend of Congressman Gary Miller and State Senator Bob Huff. I urge you to please consider expanding eastward instead of westward from the existing base. You already have so much land that you are not even using within the confines of the base right now that it makes no sense to displace the homeowners in Johnson Valley that have lived there for decades, not to mention the off roading citizens who have used and maintained Johnson Valley for over half a century.

You have other options for expansion (eastward, for example), but we, the off roading public, do not. Any other riding areas are too far away to go there and back for a weekend of riding.

This is a multi-million dollar industry that will collapse if this last vestige of riding area within a 2 hour drive is stolen from us.

Consider how much money is spent on the following items for off road riding:

1. Motorcycles
2. Quads
3. Helmets
4. Boots
5. Gloves
6. Flak vests
7. Trailers
8. Motorhomes
9. Gasoline
10. Oil
11. Handlebar grips
12. Tires
13. Chains (and sprockets)
14. Air filters
15. Food from local merchants
16. Lawn chairs

Response to Comment N-18848 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18848 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18848 (Page 2 of 2):

17. Various rentals from local businesses (generators, trailers, motorcycles, motorhomes, and so much more)
18. Goggles
19. Riding apparel (pants, shirts, kidney belts, socks, water bottles for the bikes, etc.)
20. Compressors for pumping up tires
21. Items from local hardware stores
22. Items from local automotive stores

And so many more things that one cannot even count. The off roading community supports the economy. Taking away the right of freedom of recreation in the Johnson Valley desert will further decimate an economy that is already in serious trouble and may not yet recover in our lifetimes. Also please consider the residents of Johnson Valley who have built homes, dug wells, raised families, and planted trees, some of which are decades old and are just now beginning to provide needed shade and oxygen. In conclusion, please also consider the environmental impact of losing the existing trees and other domestic plants, etc. The wind generally blows from West towards the East. If you expand Eastward, the range of mountains on the existing West Side of the base will act as a windbreak to prevent excessive erosion as troops and ordinance are exercised. Further, if gas warfare training is to be taught, the mountains will act as a barrier to prevent said gases from impacting Big Bear, the surrounding mountain and desert areas, and the Johnson Valley water supply. Johnson Valley is, in fact, the back side of Big Bear. In short, annexing Johnson Valley is a really BAD idea.

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Comment ID: N-18849  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



8951 Kona Drive, Placerville, CA 95667  
T: (930) 626-4263 F: (930) 626-4707  
AmericanMotorcyclist.com

May 25, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base

Dear 29 Palms EIS Project Manager:

Please accept this document as official comments of the American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) and our partner organization, the All-Terrain Vehicle Association (ATVA). The AMA and the ATVA firmly support the "No Action" alternative as it relates to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms U.S. Marine Corps (USMC) Base.

Founded in 1924, the AMA is the premier individual rider-based advocate of the motorcycling community. Along with our partner organization, the ATVA, we represent the interests of millions of on- and off-highway motorcyclists and all-terrain vehicle (ATV) riders nationwide. However, this document shall not preclude any of our individual members, chartered clubs or district organizations from submitting their own additional comments.

The Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area (Johnson Valley) offers unparalleled opportunities for a variety of multiple use visitors, the film industry and local residents throughout high desert communities year-round. Its varied landscape, with steep mountains, rolling hills, open valleys, dry lakebeds and sandy washes is truly unique.

It is used for everything from competitive racing events to casual family off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation, gem and mineral collecting, rocketry, land sailing and dispersed camping. No other designated "open" area in the California desert, or indeed the entire United States, provides such a variety of recreational opportunities to the general public.

Given the unequalled importance of the Johnson Valley when it comes to recreational opportunity throughout the entire Western United States, the AMA and the ATVA firmly support the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative will allow the public continued access at its current levels and also avoid the economic-related impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities.

Response to Comment N-18849 (Page 1 of 5):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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29Palms  
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*Our Specific Concerns with the DEIS are as Follows:*

- **Need for the Base Expansion**

To date, despite repeated requests from numerous sources, the USMC has provided scarce evidence to support the proposed base expansion plan. Nothing within the DEIS explains sufficiently why this expansion is needed in this specific area, especially given the potential for a combined training facility at the neighboring China Lake or Fort Irwin facilities.

A comprehensive review of the “no action” alternative was requested during the scoping phase of the process, yet it would appear the decision to move ahead with the expansion was the priority. Also the possibility of the facility expanding in a different direction was apparently not given serious consideration as it is not even included in the range of alternatives offered. Specifically, the eastward expansion would present the least conflict with the current multiple use recreation on the public lands in this area, and would have the smallest impact on the local communities and their residential and economic interests.

NEPA-1

- **Project Cost**

The DEIS fails to indicate how much the proposed project would cost. Granted the land transfer from the BLM to the USMC itself may be done at a nominal cost, and even the ongoing costs of securing and maintaining the site may not be unreasonable, but the expense of conducting the proposed training biannually would indeed be significant, potentially in the tens of millions of dollars per year. However, the public cannot evaluate this substantial concern properly because the DEIS does not include a cost estimate for these activities.

By understating or omitting much of the necessary cost information associated with the proposal, it is very difficult for members of the public to properly evaluate the project's cost to comment appropriately. The DEIS simply fails to provide the needed level of information and why it is deemed essential to future military readiness.

Also, by which accurate estimates regarding the cost of the proposed project, there is no means to weigh its purported benefits against its fiscal, environmental, and socio-economic impacts. The DEIS must demonstrate to an apprehensive public that the costs associated with this project, including those relating to ongoing training, have been accurately predicted and can be met with existing resources.

NEPA-2

Response to Comment N-18849 (Page 2 of 5):

**NEPA-2:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**SOC-1:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

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Z9Palm  
DEIS Comments  
May 25, 2011

• Economic Impacts

As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local and regional economy. Economic impacts were clearly understated and some alternatives attempt to portray the expansion as economically positive for the surrounding communities, despite little evidence to substantiate such a claim.

The provided analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict proven and long documented substantial economic contributions made by the recreating public to the local communities. To suggest that the proposed project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative.

Also, the DEIS has failed to adequately consider the economic impact the loss of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would have on the larger Southern California region as a whole. The closure of Johnson Valley would significantly affect sales of all types of OHVs and other closely related vehicles, including motorcycles, ATVs, sand rails, dune buggies and trailers. This impact, especially given current tough economic times, could be devastating to the regional motorsports dealers. The businesses that service and modify these vehicles would also be negatively impacted.

• Effects to Other Areas

There are approximately 500,000 registered OHVs in Southern California alone, with significant numbers in the surrounding states as well. As per our comments during the scoping phase, the DEIS must identify and ensure the OHV public access to other BLM lands currently closed to OHV use as part of a comprehensive mitigation strategy.

If the proposed base expansion were to take place, the impacts to other California, Arizona and Nevada public lands (e.g., BLM, Forest Service and similar state facilities) will be significant and therefore, must be fully investigated. As the recreating public is forced to seek out new opportunities, these other areas will see increased user numbers and the related issues that come from such demands.

The DEIS fails to adequately address this cumulative effect the loss of this important area will have on other recreation areas. These impacts will be significant. Visitors would be forced to seek other areas to supplant opportunities lost in Johnson Valley.

The number of displaced users would clearly be extensive given the estimated 800,000 – 1,000,000 annual visitors who recreate in the Johnson Valley currently. A clear plan to address

SOC-1

REC-1

Response to Comment N-18849 (Page 3 of 5):

REC-1:

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

GEN-1:

All relevant technical studies are contained in Volume II of the EIS (*Appendices*).

Appendix H of the EIS has four sections – H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling. Only Section H-4 is the noise primer. As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

Section 3.10 of the EIS describes the existing biological conditions, while Section 4.10 analyzes the impacts on vegetative and wildlife species present in each acquisition study area.

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these displaced users must be formulated and implemented prior to any closure.

The final plan must include specific plans for land use amendments that would allow for recreation and competition events in areas that are currently unavailable and stipulate an acre for an acre mitigation of any lost opportunities. This “no net loss” policy will help to assure a proper balance on public lands and minimize impacts on the surrounding areas.

Through congressional designation, lands currently closed to off-highway enthusiasts could be reclassified and made available to the recreating public; however, no such mitigation plan is offered in the document. Instead, the DEIS states those impacted will be addressed through the development of a Recreation Management Plan at some later time (section 6.2 of the DEIS).

• Environmental and Noise impacts

The DEIS discloses that the proposed base expansion and related training activities will negatively impact surrounding air quality, ambient noise levels, biological and cultural resources. Other data included in the DEIS indicates that the project will result in impacts to airspace management, water supply, water quality, and result in increased greenhouse gas emissions. However, when disclosing each of these impacts the DEIS concludes that the project’s potential effects are simply not significant, or significant yet unavoidable. Nevertheless, the DEIS fails to include the technical studies or data necessary to support these conclusions or allow the public to understand how they were reached.

For example, the DEIS includes a technical appendix for noise impacts, but not a study of the project’s specific potential impacts on the surrounding area. In its place, it includes a briefing on noise metrics. This is valid in terms of general noise effect information and measuring methodology. It is not suitable in terms of determining the actual noise impacts of this specific project.

Similarly, the Biological Resource appendix is incomplete. It fails to describe existing biological conditions on the impacted area or even identify where they exist. Nor does it give details as to what extent these biological resources will be when disturbed by the project. In fact, the Biological Resources section only discusses the project’s potential impacts on the desert tortoise while ignoring other species that are present in the area entirely. Given this oversight there is no way for the public to sufficiently review or comment properly on the biological impacts.

• Future Uses

The DEIS provides little guarantees that the USMC will not close the Restricted Public Access Area (RPAA) envisioned under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6. Nothing in the DEIS or the project

REC-1

GEN-1

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18849 (Page 4 of 5):

NEPA-1:

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

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indicates that this would not or could not happen. On the contrary, the DEIS does not even describe the conditions under which such a closure could occur.

The decision to close the RPAA is left to the USMC, with no specific process on how to appeal such a decision. The DEIS must disclose the project's recreation impacts under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6 may finally be indistinguishable to those of Alternative 1.

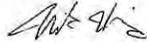
Finally, the DEIS has failed to incorporate a comprehensive plan to return any withdrawn land to public use once it has fulfilled its purpose for the military. In all likelihood, the USMC will not need to train in this manner indefinitely. When training operations cease, plans must be included to rehabilitate and return these lands to the public domain. Plans and the necessary funding for such an effort need careful consideration and must be put in place now as part of this process.

• Conclusion

This proposal and the supporting DEIS does not meet the minimum standards established under the National Environmental Policy Act guidelines. Given these deficiencies, the AMA and the ATVA are opposed to the project and requests that the USMC re-examine and reconsider carefully its needs. Efforts to work with and coordinate training exercises that utilize existing facilities and lands must be revisited. Until such an effort is made we will remain in support of the "No Action" alternative as the only viable option.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS. If you have any questions concerning the content of this letter, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Sincerely,



Nicholas Harris  
Western States Representative

NEPA-1

GEN-2

Response to Comment N-18849 (Page 5 of 5):

GEN-2:

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

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Comment ID: N-18850  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

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May 25, 2011

Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
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1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil)

*Re: Comment Letter re Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and  
Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base*

Dear Project Manager:

This firm represents EcoLogic Partners, Inc. ("EcoLogic"), a consortium of family-oriented recreation groups dedicated to preserving public access to outdoor recreational venues in California and throughout the American West. On behalf of EcoLogic and its members, we have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the Department of the Navy's "Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment" project, which is the necessary antecedent to the proposed expansion of the United States Marine Corps base at Twenty-Nine Palms, California. For the reasons discussed below, EcoLogic objects to the proposed Project, including the Navy's preferred alternative (Alternative 6), and herein takes the position that the Project, while certainly providing some marginal benefit to the Marine Corps training mission, is not necessary to that mission nor justified in light of its cost. Further, EcoLogic finds the Draft EIS analytically deficient. Not only does the document fail to study key impacts, many of its conclusions rest on dubious, unsupported assumptions. Perhaps worst of all, the Draft EIS omits fundamental baseline information regarding the environmental resources that currently exist in the proposed expansion area, rendering an impact analysis impossible.

**I. THE PROPOSED PROJECT IS TOO COSTLY**

Although the training facilities currently available at Twenty-Nine Palms and other USMC bases have allowed the Marines to ably conduct military operations in Kuwait, Iraq,

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 1 of 18):

**NEPA-1 and NEPA-2:**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**NEPA-3 and NEPA-4:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**GEN-1:**

Chapter 3 of the EIS contains background information for each resource area, while impacts are analyzed in Chapter 4. All relevant technical studies and additional information are contained as appendices in Volume 2. References cited are included in the project Administrative Record.

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**GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP**  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
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Page 2

Afghanistan, the Department of the Navy has now decided that it needs to expand the Twenty-Nine Palms facility by more than 200,000 acres to provide for "sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs), each consisting of three battalion task forces and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements." (DEIS, ES-1) It is difficult to see how the recent wars in the Middle East, or any reasonably anticipated conflict elsewhere in the world, would require that an entire MEB be trained simultaneously at a single military installation. Increasingly, military experts and civilian decision-makers are beginning to question the strategic and tactical value of maintaining and training such large (and costly) forces.

A few recent comments demonstrate the point:

- George Will (*Washington Post* – May 3, 2011):
  - "[T]he enormous military footprint in Afghanistan, next door to bin Laden's Pakistan refuge, seems especially disproportionate in the wake of his elimination by a small cadre of specialists."
  - Jim Lacey of the Marine Corps War College notes that Gen. David Petraeus has said there are perhaps about 100 al-Qaida fighters in Afghanistan. "Did anyone," Lacey asks, do the math? There are, he says, more than 140,000 coalition soldiers in Afghanistan, or 1,400 for every al-Qaida fighter. It costs about \$1 million a year to deploy and support every soldier – or up to \$140 billion, or close to \$1.5 billion a year, for each al-Qaida fighter. "In what universe do we find strategists to whom this makes sense?" he asked."
- Mark Thompson (*Time* – "How To Save A Trillion Dollars" – April 25, 2011):
  - "The U.S. continues to field and maintain a global force designed during an era of sky's-the-limit defense budgets."
  - "Across Washington, all sorts of people are starting to ask the unthinkable questions about long-sacred military budgets. Can the U.S. really afford more than 500 bases at home and around the world? Do the Air Force, Navy and Marines really need \$400 billion in new jet fighters when their fleets of F-15s, F-16s and F-18s will give them vast air superiority for years to come? Does the Navy need 50 attack submarines when America's main enemy hides in caves?"
  - "It may seem strange to talk about defense cuts while the U.S. is waging one war in Afghanistan, is mopping up a second in Iraq and has just launched a half-war in

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 2 of 18):

NEPA-5:

Section 4.13 of the EIS addresses impacts to water resources. As described in the EIS, development of new groundwater sources in other basins for potable water supply would not occur under the proposed action. The analysis of water resources impacts is presented in Section 4.13 of the EIS. A long-term water study is not within the scope of this EIS. If one of the alternatives proposed in the EIS is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

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**GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP**  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
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Libya. But those conflicts have made it easy to forget the warning of Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that "the single biggest threat to our national security is our debt." Which points to an almost tragic irony of Washington's \$700 billion annual appetite for military stores: we are borrowing cash from China to pay for weapons that we would presumably use against it. If the Chinese want to slay us, they don't need to attack us with their missiles. They just need to call in their loans."

- "Numbers alone tell much of the story: We are now spending 50% more (even excluding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) than we did on 9/11. We are spending more on the military than we did during the Cold War, when U.S. and NATO troops stared across Germany's Fulda Gap at a real superpower foe with real tanks and thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at U.S. cities. In fact, the U.S. spends about as much on its military as the rest of the world combined."
- "While the U.S.'s military spending has jumped from \$1,500 per capita in 1998 to \$2,700 in 2008, its NATO allies have been spending \$500 per person over the same span. As long as the U.S. is overspending on its defense, it lets its allies skimp on theirs and instead pour the savings into infrastructure, education and health care. So even as U.S. taxpayers fret about their health care costs, their tax dollars are paying for a military that is subsidizing the health care of their European allies."
- "[R]evising America's defense budget will happen only if the U.S. takes a hard-eyed look at the dozens of military operations that are no longer vital or affordable."
- "\$1 trillion in cuts wouldn't really be as drastic as it sounds – or as the military's no-surrender defenders insist. Such a trim would still leave the Pentagon fatter than it was before 9/11."
- "California Representative Howard McKeon, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services Committee, says, 'A defense budget in decline portends an America in decline.' Attitudes like that can bankrupt a nation, and the public senses its."
- "For too long, an uninterested and distracted citizenry has been content to leave the messy business of national defense to those with bottom-line reasons for force-feeding it like foie gras goose. It's long past time . . . for U.S. taxpayers to

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 3 of 18):

NOI-1:

Noise exposures from existing/current conditions are provided in Chapter 3. Appendix H has four sections: H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling; Section H-4 is the noise primer.

As explained in Section 3.9.3, the aircraft and ordnance operations for the Baseline scenario was *initially* based on WR 02-13. However, all modeled operations from WR 02-13 were updated and validated by the USMC to represent current activity. For example, the EAF and airspace operations were updated in 2009-2010 for the MV-22 West Coast Basing EIS as stated in Section 3.9.3.1. Furthermore, ordnance operations from WR 02-13 were doubled relative to the 2003 noise study to better represent current activity at the Combat Center as stated in Section 3.9.3.1.

Modeling for the EAF is consistent with the Navy AICUZ Instruction which recommends use of annual average daily operations. If annual average busy day operations were modeled, it is estimated CNEL would be only 3 dB greater than CNEL reported in the DEIS and exposure to airfield noise exposure greater than or equal to 65 dB would likely be fully contained within the Combat Center boundary.

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demand that its government spend what is needed to defend the country – not a penny more.”

- Robert Gates, United States Secretary of Defense
  - “Given America’s difficult economic circumstances and parlous fiscal condition, military spending on things large and small can and should expect closer, harsher scrutiny. The gusher has been turned off, and will stay off for a good period of time.” (CNN, May 9, 2010)
  - “The department must start setting priorities, making real trade-offs and separating appetites from real requirements.” (Quoted in Huffington Post, August 9, 2010)
  - “We are not exempt from scrutiny and being asked to figure out what we are doing with less dollars.” (Quoted in MSNBC.com, January 6, 2011.)
  - “The spigot of defense funding opened by 9/11 is closing.”
  - “It is important to remember that every defense dollar spent to over-ensure against a remote or diminishing risk — or in effect to run up the score in a capability where the United States is already dominant — is a dollar not available to take care of our people, reset the force, win the wars we are in and improve capabilities in areas where we are underinvested and potentially vulnerable.” (As quoted in Associated Press article, April 6, 2009).

NEPA-1

These quotations demonstrate that well-informed commentators, military experts, and the Secretary of Defense himself believe it is time that the desires of the Army, Air Force, Marines, and Navy yield to the economic realities facing the United States. Only those programs, weapon systems, force structures, and facilities projects with an established, well-documented need should be funded. All others must either be revamped to better address an actual military deficiency or be abandoned. Ironically, it is the nation’s unwillingness or inability to curb defense spending — which has *doubled* since September 11, 2001 — that has made the United States so debt-ridden and vulnerable.

With respect to the proposed base expansion at Twenty-Nine Palms, the Project documents, including the Draft EIS, are remarkable in that they fail to explain why the current facilities, however small when compared to what the Marines want, are inadequate to meet the basic training needs of this branch of the military. Nowhere does the Marine Corp identify or describe any mission failure, large or small, that resulted from an inability to train an entire MEB

NEPA-2

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 4 of 18):

NOI-1 Continued:

Airspace flight operations are assessed using the CNELmr metric consistent with Navy RAICUZ Instructions. This metric accounts for the sporadic nature of airspace activity as well as the “startle” effect caused by low-altitude high-speed flights (see Section 3.9.1). The Maximum Sound Level (Lmax) metric was not specifically designed to measure impulsive sounds and although Lmax provides supplemental noise exposure information, the correct noise metric for assessment of land use compatibility is CNEL (and its derivatives). In addition to the aforementioned high-altitude refueling activity, modeled operations included low-altitude high-speed flight operations characteristic of existing and proposed flight activity at the Combat Center (see Appendix H).

BIO-1:

Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information. As noted in your comment, noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel.

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simultaneously at the same site. In fact, in both Iraq and Afghanistan, the expeditionary portion of the Marine's mission was carried out with great success.<sup>1</sup> It has been the long-term occupation of these countries, and the forced, constant exposure to IEDs and similar low-tech weapons, that has caused the majority of casualties. So while the Marines certainly *desire* a larger base and could probably make productive use of the extra space, there is no evidence that they *need* more land or that their combat readiness will suffer markedly without it.

NEPA-2

The Draft EIS and other documents also fail to mention how much the proposed Project will cost. While the land may be transferred from the Bureau of Land Management to the Department of the Navy for next to nothing, and while the ongoing costs of maintaining the site may not be prohibitive, the expense of conducting the full-MEB training twice a year could be huge, running to the tens of millions of dollars per annum. Again, no one can be sure how expensive this will be, because the Marines did not bother to calculate the cost (or if they did calculate it, they did not feel compelled to disclose the figures.) This is precisely the kind of budgetary arrogance that typifies military spending requests. Without accurate estimates regarding the cost of the proposed project, there is no means to weigh its purported benefits against its fiscal, environmental, and socio-economic impacts.

NEPA-3

**II. THE DRAFT EIS IS INADEQUATE**

**A. Failure to Provide Basic, Necessary Studies**

Before identifying the specific defects of the EIS on a topic-by-topic basis, it is important first to examine a systemic flaw that plagues the entire EIS – the failure to provide the technical studies that purportedly support the document's impact analyses.

GEN-1

Data set forth in the EIS indicate that the proposed base expansion and the training activities contemplated on the newly-acquired land would adversely affect air quality, ambient sound/noise levels, biological resources, recreational activities, cultural resources, and socio-economic conditions. Other data from the EIS suggests that the project could also result in adverse impacts on hazardous materials, airspace management, water supply, water quality, and greenhouse gas emissions. As to each of these impact categories, the EIS concludes that the project's potential effects are either (a) not significant, or (b) significant and unavoidable. However, in most cases, the EIS fails to include the technical studies necessary to support such conclusions.

<sup>1</sup> The Draft EIS admits this fact on page 1-23, stating, "Marine Corps successes in the first Gulf War in 1991, in leading the introduction of U.S. forces into Afghanistan in 2001, and again in Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003, have validated the Marine Corps' doctrinal training philosophy of live-fire combined arms MAGTF integration through CAX."

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 5 of 18):

**BIO-1 Continued:**

Discussion is included throughout the EIR noting the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for Nelson's bighorn sheep (page 4.10-14 and others) and the desert tortoise (page 4.10-11).

**BIO-2:**

Section D, Paragraphs 1-3: The Draft EIS contains the best available information on the occurrence and -distribution of special status and other status animal and plant species in the west study area. The BLM is a cooperating agency in the preparation of the EIS, and was unable to provide any wildlife or plant inventory information. As a result, the detailed surveys conducted for the EIS, which include surveys for: 1) tortoise abundance and density; 2) abundance of the Mojave fringe-toed lizard, burrowing owl, Mojave ground squirrel, and chuckwalla; 3) distribution and abundance of all sensitive plant species; 4) occurrence of special status aquatic invertebrate species; represent the best available information.

Section D, Paragraph 4: The Marine Corps is committed to protection of the public and the environment. Section 4.4.2.3 of the EIS discusses the management of hazardous materials and wastes under the proposed action. Under any land acquisition scenario, current procedures for spill prevention, containment, cleanup, and management of hazardous wastes (including expended ordnance) would be implemented as outlined in Combat Center Order 5090.1D and environmental Standard Operating Procedures.

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For example, the EIS fails to provide a water supply study, a water quality study, or an inventory of potential greenhouse gas sources and emissions. The EIS *does* provide a technical appendix for noise, but it is not a study *per se* of the project's potential impacts on the existing ambient environment. Instead, it is merely a primer on noise metrics – very helpful in terms of understanding noise measurements, but not helpful at all in terms of determining the actual noise impacts of the project.

The Biological Resource appendix is likewise deficient. It does not describe existing biological conditions on the affected site(s) or specifically identify where they exist. Nor does it explain how and to what extent biological resources will be affected by the project. Rather, the Biological Resource appendix simply describes the types of disturbances that currently occur on the Combat Center and in the proposed expansion areas, and then draws some conclusions regarding the project's potential impacts on the federally-listed desert tortoise. No other species is discussed. So this Biological Resource appendix cannot serve as the technical basis for the impact analysis set forth in the biology section of EIS. Even if the desert tortoise discussion was adequate (which it is not, see below), the absence of any assessment of project impacts on desert birds, mammals, other reptiles, sensitive plants, and wildlife movement, renders the document incomplete and defective. The EIS also refers to the 2007 Basewide Biological Opinion prepared by the USFWS (the 2007 BO), and contends that the conservation measures from this BO will effectively mitigate Project impacts on desert tortoise. As with other critical documents, however, the 2007 BO is not included in the EIS as an appendix, so there is no way for the public to review its contents or test the assertions made in the EIS.

The Cultural Resource appendix is also of little value. It is merely a compendium of the various known artifacts and historical sites that exist in the areas being proposed for annexation to the base. Nowhere does the appendix actually evaluate the proposed Project's potential to damage or destroy these artifacts and/or historical sites. Therefore, it, too, is wholly inadequate and may not serve as the technical basis for the EIS's analysis of Project impacts on cultural resources.

Finally, as indicated above, the EIS provides no data whatsoever as to the cost of the proposed Project, including costs associated with the MEB training operations to be conducted on the newly-acquired land.

GEN-1

NEPA-4

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 6 of 18):

**BIO-2 Continued:**

Section D, Paragraphs 5: The Draft EIS presents a discussion of impacts to all sensitive plant and wildlife species known to be present in the proposed action area. Impacts to the desert tortoise are given appropriate prominence in the impact analysis, as it is the only resident species listed under the Federal ESA.

Section D, Paragraphs 6-7: While it is true that survey methods have changed and continue to change, it is not true that these changes invalidate previous estimates of tortoise density or abundance. The surveys conducted in 1997/1999 (Woodman et al. 2001) represent the best available information for tortoise density on the Combat Center. Tortoise surveys are currently being conducted at the Combat Center as directed under the Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan and the Basewide Biological Opinion; however, the results of these surveys will not be available until 2012 and thus could not be included in the EIS. Surveys conducted for the study areas (Karl 2010) used both the accepted USFWS protocol and the TRED model survey. Calculations of abundance and density for were performed for both methods for the preferred alternative (Alternative 6) as part of the Section 7 consultation process with USFWS. The values generated by these two methods were similar, with the TRED model survey providing a smaller confidence interval and greater precision than the USFWS. Therefore, the TRED model survey was presented in the EIS as the most accurate and detailed model. The conclusion drawn in your comment regarding the comparison of tortoise densities on the Combat Center and the west study area (Section D, paragraph 7) is inaccurate.

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**B. The EIS Fails to Analyze USMC Potential to Deplete Aquifers in Western Study Area**

On page 3.13-19, the EIS makes a startling disclosure: The Combat Center is running out of water and has no current means to augment its supply.<sup>2</sup> Specifically, the Combat Center obtains all of its water – potable and non-potable – through groundwater pumping. However, the aquifer that provides most of this water, Surprise Spring, is becoming dangerously depleted. In fact, the Marine’s have so overdrafted the aquifer that groundwater levels have dropped by as much as 190 feet. (EIS, 3.13-19) Worse, Surprise Spring is an ancient aquifer that does not recharge readily, which means that it “is not a renewable resource.” (EIS, 3.13-19) In short, the Combat Center’s primary source of water is rapidly disappearing and the Marines desperately need to find another one.

The Western Study Area (“WSA”), by contrast, overlies a different groundwater subbasin – one with a substantial supply of water. (EIS, 3.13-20; Table 3.13-5) It would appear, then, that the Marine Corps, apart from wanting the WSA for military training operations, may also be looking to acquire access to the groundwater resources beneath it. Although the groundwater from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers is high in Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), it can either be treated for potable uses, or “blended” with higher-quality water for a variety of potable and non-potable uses. The EIS never acknowledges that the Marines plan to use WSA groundwater to supplement existing supplies. Indeed, the EIS does not even discuss this very plausible scenario, and for this reason alone is defective. Nevertheless, the EIS does mention that the Marines are “evaluating plans to ‘blend’ groundwater from the Surprise Spring subbasin with those [sic] from another aquifer(s).” (EIS, 3.13-19) These blending scenarios were apparently modeled by the USGS in 2008. However, the details of this modeling effort are not provided.

The water resource data provided in the EIS, while cryptic, suggest strongly that the Marine Corps, once it secures possession of the WSA, will begin pumping groundwater from the Johnson Valley and Means Valley aquifers to blend with water derived from Surprise Spring. The EIS, however, fails to assess whether and to what extent this effort to temporarily address the Combat Center’s water shortage will deplete the aquifers in Johnson Valley and Means

<sup>2</sup> The EIS attempts to downplay this problem by claiming that conservation efforts at the Combat Center have reduced water consumption by 26% over the last decade. However, despite these reductions in consumption, the Combat Center still overdrafts the Surprise Spring aquifer by 2,900 acre feet (AF) per year, and overdrafts the Twentynine Palms Valley aquifer by 1,040 AF per year. (Table 3.13-5)  
<sup>3</sup> The Combat Center also draws groundwater from the Twentynine Palms Valley subbasin, which is also depleted and functions as a recharge deficit. (Table 3.13-5)

NEPA-5

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 7 of 18):

**BIO-2 Continued:**

Information from one survey cannot be used to identify a trend – the USFWS requires more than 10 years of surveys across their monitoring strata to even begin to identify population trends (USFWS 2010). Further, mountainous areas not suitable for desert tortoises compose a much larger portion of the Combat Center than in the west study area, thus leading to large areas of low desert tortoise density on the Combat Center. Taking into account the different density categories used in the Combat Center desert tortoise density surveys as compared to the west study area surveys, as well as the topography, the densities observed on the Combat Center after decades of military training are roughly comparable to those observed in the west study area – large areas of low densities with pockets of moderate density where habitat is most suitable and disturbance is lower.

Section D, Paragraph 8: The estimates of take presented in the Draft EIS include a large range only when including potential impacts on the existing Combat Center. Estimates of take in the lands to be acquired have much less spread due to survey data with a greater number of density “categories”. As noted in your comment, the Marine Corps consulted with the USFWS under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act to formally identify an estimate of “take” under the preferred alternative, as well as appropriate conservation measures to minimize or offset potential impacts to tortoises and tortoise habitat. The outcome of this consultation is detailed in the Biological Opinion (see Appendix O of the Final EIS). The Draft EIS does not state that the project would have “no significant effects” on biological resources, as your comment suggests.

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Valley. In fact, the EIS does not even disclose how much water the proposed Project will require. As a result, the EIS is deficient as a matter of law.

In short, the Combat Center's undisclosed desire to acquire the water beneath the WSA reminds one of the following dialogue from the movie *Chinatown*:

Noah Cross: "You see Mr. Gittes. Either you bring the water to L.A. – or your bring L.A. to the water."

Jake Gittes: "How do you do that?"

Noah Cross: "—just incorporate the Valley into the city so the water goes to L.A. after all. It's very simple."

— *Chinatown* (Screenplay by Robert Townes)

**C. The EIS Noise Analysis is Inadequate**

As indicated above, the EIS does not actually provide a Noise Study as a technical appendix. Instead, Appendix H is simply a primer on noise modeling and does not provide any data on the existing sound environment or the Project's impact on that environment. Likewise, the EIS itself fails to describe ambient sound levels in and adjacent to the three study areas – i.e., the WSA, the Eastern Study Area ("ESA"), or the Southern Study Area ("SSA"). Without existing sound level data, there is no way to measure the extent to which the Project will alter the current sound environment. Nor is there any way to determine whether the Project's net impact on noise is significant.

Even the baseline used for "existing" noise conditions at the *Combat Center* defies logic. Rather than measure *current* aircraft noise (i.e., from 2008 or 2009), the EIS uses a 2003 noise study – WR 02-13 – that is based on airfield operations that took place in 2001. Not only is such information 10 years old, it fails to account for the significant increase in flight operations that has occurred since the "War on Terror" began. It appears that the Marines, in an effort to trim costs and/or save time, simply pulled an old noise study off the shelf rather than perform a new one. NEPA does not permit this kind of sloppy work, especially since there is nothing preventing the Marines from conducting a fully updated noise study at the *Combat Center*. There is also no explanation for altering the noise model to reflect "annual average daily operations" instead of "annual average busy day operations." (See, EIS, 3.9-4) This change results in an underreporting of potential noise effects.

NEPA-5

NOI-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 8 of 18):

**BIO-2 Continued:**

In several locations (e.g., Table ES-2, page 4.10-11, Table 4.10-14), it is clearly stated that impacts to the desert tortoise would be significant. Finally, a suite of mitigation measures being developed with USFWS, such as a translocation plan, designation of new Special Use Areas, etc. are described in more detail in the Final EIS and would be expected to reduce the take of tortoises, though not to a level of less than significant.

**REC-1:**

Section 4.2.1, *Approach to Analysis for Recreation*, acknowledges incomplete or unavailable information, therefore, in accordance with CEQ regulations the Marine Corps conducted interviews with BLM and other key recreation organizations and stakeholders to obtain reliable data and assumptions on annual visitor-days of use. The Marine Corps worked closely with BLM to develop reasonable assumptions for estimated loss of visitor-days of use from Johnson Valley as described under each action alternative. These assumptions were approved by BLM staff knowledgeable about and responsible for recreation management of the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a Displaced OHV Recreation Study (DORS) to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

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The EIS noise analysis also uses the wrong metric for determining the significance of project-related noise events. For example, the MEB training contemplated by the proposed Project entails low-altitude strafing and bombing runs by fixed and non-fixed wing aircraft.<sup>4</sup> Flight operations such as these create high-intensity noise of very short duration, resulting in substantial annoyance to any person living or working nearby. Rather than assess this impact using the Lmax noise metric, which is specifically designed to measure impulsive sound, the EIS uses the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) metric, which averages noise levels over a certain period of time, usually 24 hours. Obviously, this metric will not fully capture the noise (and annoyance) that results from very intense but sporadic noise events caused by military jet flyovers. To make matters worse, it does not appear that the EIS measured aircraft noise while in combat mode – i.e., flying fast and at low altitude.<sup>5</sup> Instead, the EIS aircraft noise model was based on two aerial refueling tracks – one at 19,000 feet AGL and one at 22,000 AGL. (EIS, 3.9-6)<sup>6</sup> Again, this kind of modeling decision results in an underreporting of aircraft noise impacts.

We would point out that using the CNEL metric *does* make sense when determining noise impacts near the Combat Center airports, where the number of flight operations is high enough to warrant time-averaging. It just doesn't make sense when determining noise impacts in those areas affected by combat training flights.

In addition, the EIS fails to analyze adequately the effect of project-related noise on wildlife. The EIS's discussion on this topic is remarkably brief and general, even though military operations such as artillery firing, ordnance explosions, combat flights, and tank and troop movements generate the kind of high-intensity noise that frightens wildlife and may disrupt their normal behaviors. For example, according to Figure 3.1-8 of the EIS, the Noise Study included only two (2) "points of interest" located within the WSA. This demonstrates that the Noise Study was focused exclusively on impacts to humans, ignoring entirely the Project's potentially devastating noise effects on animals in the desert.<sup>7</sup> Birds, reptiles, ungulates (and other mammals) all are highly-sensitive to sound changes. Given the number of wildlife species in the proposed acquisitions areas (especially the WSA) – including the federally-threatened desert tortoise – the EIS should provide a more thorough and searching analysis of the Project's potential to cause noise-related impacts on biological resources.

<sup>4</sup> According to the EIS, combat training flights will be conducted at altitudes as low as 300 feet above ground level (AGL). (EIS, 3.7-9)

<sup>5</sup> The EIS admits that, with the Project, "[o]verflights would increase within existing and proposed airspace and could operate at lower altitudes than currently allowed in specified areas. (EIS, 4.1-5). However, the EIS does not measure the noise impacts of such overflights.

<sup>6</sup> Unlike refueling operations, bombing and strafing runs occur at very low altitudes.

<sup>7</sup> See, EIS at 3.9-1 [Describing noise metrics as measuring sound in relation to human sensitivities.]

NOI-1

BIO-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 9 of 18):

REC-1 Continued:

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

AQ-1:

Comment noted. Table 5-3 in the FEIS has been revised to include the 2009 GHG emissions for the Combat Center. Climate change is a global effect or impact. As stated on DEIS page 5-33, currently, there are no formally adopted or published NEPA thresholds of significance for GHG emissions. The Marine Corps chooses to use the U.S. GHG inventory as an indicator of the baseline for global GHG emissions on which to compare proposed GHG emissions. This comparison is deemed adequate to determine the significance of proposed GHG emissions for NEPA purposes. The fact that the Marine Corps utilized one of the approved methods for demonstrating conformity that resulted in a commitment from the MDAQMD to account for criteria emissions in their next attainment planning budget bears no legal nexus to what standards should be used to determine the significance of project GHG emissions.

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**D. The EIS's Biological Impacts Analysis is Inadequate**

Available data from the BLM and other sources show that the WSA is home to a wide array of sensitive plant and wildlife species, including the desert tortoises. Yet the EIS does not indicate where these species are located within the WSA; nor does it overlay the proposed military training exercises onto species maps to determine where potential conflicts might arise. Without such overlays, it is impossible for the public (and the Marine Corps) to know with any kind of precision whether the proposed MEB training activities will kill, injure, disrupt, or displace sensitive plants and animals. This is not a speculative concern. The Marine Corps, during the planned MEB exercises, intends to activate 15,000 to 20,000 troops, backed by tanks and other vehicles, and engage in live-fire combat training. This will involve hundreds of thousands of rounds of small arms ammunition, artillery rounds, tank rounds, and missiles delivered from aircraft. The exercise areas will effectively be transformed into highly-violent war zones. In such a situation, there is no question that existing wildlife will be killed or injured or, at the very least, displaced. However, the EIS provides very little information on this subject.

Perhaps the Marine Corps is assuming the Section 7 Biological Opinion will cover these issues. If so, the assumption is unfounded. First, the Biological Opinion, when completed, will only address potential impacts on federally-listed species – i.e., the desert tortoise. No other species will be covered. Second, the Biological Opinion is required under the Endangered Species Act; it does not satisfy the Marine Corps' separate and independent obligation under NEPA to disclose impacts to biological resources.

Part of the problem is that the Marines, in preparing the EIS, conducted very few wildlife studies of the 180,000-acre WSA. According to Table 3.10-1 of the EIS, the Marines performed the following biological resource surveys in the WSA: (1) one survey for special status plants in 2008, (2) one survey for reptiles and burrowing owl in 2008, and (3) one survey for Mojave ground squirrel in 2008. No bird surveys (other than for burrowing owl) were conducted. No mammal surveys (other than for Mojave ground squirrel) were conducted. There was no attempt to identify and locate bat roosts. Insects were not surveyed at all. As a result, the EIS does not

BIO-2

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**SOC-1:**

The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**WAT-1:**

Section 3.13.1 of the EIS states that all naturally occurring, surface water features are ephemeral and contain water only during and after infrequent rain events. The EIS also states that no information is available on existing water quality conditions associated with intermittent wet areas (washes and playas) at the Combat Center. It is likely that water quality for intermittent flows is influenced by the amounts of suspended sediment and/or dissolved salts, which are expected to vary for different substrate types, such as bedrock, alluvial fans, and playa surfaces.

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provide a complete or reliable inventory of the various plant and wildlife species that exist in the WSA, even though the BLM possesses much of this information.<sup>8</sup>

The EIS also fails to discuss the potential for lead and other chemicals from expended ordnance to enter the water supply used by wildlife or to accumulate in the plant materials eaten by wildlife.

Another shortcoming of the EIS biological impacts analysis is that it tends to focus myopically on the desert tortoise and pays scant attention to the other sensitive species in the affected areas. This is not to say that impacts on the tortoise are unimportant. On the contrary, they are critically important, and this Project has the potential to “take” hundreds of tortoises annually, possibly frustrating the fragile state of the species recovery. However, the tortoise is *not* an umbrella species for all or even most of the other wildlife in the study areas. Therefore, the EIS must give a full accounting of potential impacts on all sensitive birds, mammals (including bats), reptiles, amphibians, and insects that use or reside in these parts of the Mojave Desert.

With respect to Project impacts on the desert tortoise, the EIS has major baseline data problems. In recent years, tortoise experts and statisticians have realized that survey methods used in the 1980s and 1990s, including the manner in which transects were run, produced unreliable results. In fact, data from surveys conducted prior to 2005 are largely unusable; and they certainly cannot be mixed with or compared to data from surveys conducted from 2005 onward. However, this is exactly the error that the EIS makes in its tortoise analysis. For tortoise densities on the *Combat Center*, the EIS relies on strip transect surveys conducted in 1997 and 1999. (EIS, 3.10-24) For tortoise densities in the *WSA*, the EIS relies on tortoise sign surveys conducted in 2009. (EIS, 3.10-41) The EIS then tries to compare these two data sets, which any tortoise expert knows is a dubious exercise.

About the only meaningful conclusion to be drawn from the tortoise data derived from surveys of the *Combat Center* is that base operations have resulted in significant reductions in

<sup>8</sup> Although Figure 3.10-5 of the EIS purports to depict the vegetation communities of the West, East, and South studies areas, the vegetative mapping for the WSA so coarse as to be worthless. The EIS itself admits that “[u]nlike the *Combat Center* and the other two acquisition study areas, plant communities have not been mapped to a high level of detail within the entirety of the west study area.” (EIS, 3.10-34) In fact, only 57% of the WSA has been subjected to high-quality mapping. With respect to where in the WSA certain wildlife species reside, Table 3.10-7 provides only the most general information. For example, when discussing the desert tortoise, the table indicates that the species “[o]ccurs in suitable habitat throughout the west study area.” As to the Mojave fringe-toad lizard, the table states that this species “[o]ccurs in the southern portion of the west study area.” For purposes of determining whether the military activities contemplated under the proposed Project will affect these species and their habitat, such vague statements have almost no value.

BIO-2

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 11 of 18):

WAT-1 Continued:

The impacts to ephemeral streams or intermittent washes are discussed on page 4.13-5 in section 4.13.2.1. The EIS mentions that exercises avoid playas to the extent possible. Specifically, “*Combat Center Order 5090.1D (MAGTF Training Command 2006)* provides general guidance for avoiding impacts to natural resources, as well as specific guidance for avoiding disturbance of playas or other sensitive areas. The existing INRMP and compliance under *Combat Center Order 5090.1D* applies to existing and continued use in the *Combat Center* and would be expanded to cover the acquisition areas.”

AQ-2:

The use of the 2002 baseline data provides for a more conservative analysis than using the higher 2009 baseline, thus ultimately providing a more accurate calculation of change in emissions since the higher 2009 levels would not be representative of emissions levels in future years.

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**GATZKE DILLON & BALLANCE LLP**  
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tortoise density, at least compared to similar habitat areas adjacent to the base – e.g., those in WSA. In light of this, the proposed Project, if implemented in the WSA, may cause similar tortoise declines in the expansion area. The EIS does not really tackle this issue. Instead, it suggests that there will be no net change in threats to the tortoise, since the Project would displace existing OHV activities. However, this is an oversimplified and inaccurate analysis. There is no data indicating that OHV use in the WSA (Johnson Valley) has resulted in perceptible declines in tortoise populations. In fact, tortoise densities in Johnson Valley have been and remain significantly higher than tortoise densities on the Combat Center (allowing, of course, for discrepancies in the survey methods and data).

Finally, on the matter of the Project’s anticipated “take” of tortoises, the EIS states that under Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative), the Project would result in the take of between \_\_\_ and \_\_\_ tortoises. This is a huge range. Although the Biological Opinion for this Project has not yet been released, it would be unusual for the USFWS to issue an Incidental Take Statement (“ITS”) where the “take” range is so wide. The Marines must conduct a more thorough study of potential “take” to predict with greater precision that actual number of tortoise that will be lost as a result of the Project. Without such a thorough study, the EIS is inadequate. Further, without a more exact range of potential take, the USFWS will not be able to issue a Biological Opinion and ITS that comply with Section 7 of the ESA.

**E. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project Impacts on Recreation**

The EIS concludes correctly that the proposed Project, if implemented in the WSA, will have a significant effect on outdoor recreation. However, on the issue of recreation impacts, the EIS makes certain erroneous assumptions that result in a skewed assessment of project alternatives. Specifically, the EIS assumes that the number of “dispersed use” visitor days lost under Alternative 6 (the “Preferred Project”) will be the same as the number lost under Alternatives 4 and 5. (EIS, Table 4.2-4) This is almost certainly incorrect, given that under Alternative 6 only 44% of the Johnson Valley OHV area would be available for part-time public use (through the proposed Restricted Public Access program), whereas under Alternatives 4 and 5 the entire Johnson Valley OHV area (100%) would be available for part-time public use. The difference is not inconsequential, as it amounts to more than 106,000 acres of land. Given that “dispersed use” means exactly that – *dispersed use* – it is irrational to assume that the 82,802 acres available for public use under Alternative 6 will accommodate the same number of visitors as the 189,470 acres available for public use under Alternatives 4 and 5. The more reasonable assumption is that a significant percentage of potential visitors will bypass Johnson Valley rather than be crowded into the small area provided under the RPAA for Alternative 6.

It is critical that this analytical error be corrected, because it infects the EIS’s assessment of the project’s impacts on (1) recreational use displacement, and (2) socio-economic conditions.

BIO-2

REC-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 12 of 18):

**AQ-3:**

The method utilized by the Marine Corps to demonstrate conformity in this case is specifically prescribed by MDAQMD Rule 2002(H)(1)(e). The SIP revision method for demonstrating conformity was not pre-decisional because, at the time that the conformity analysis was submitted to the MDAQMD, no irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources had been dedicated to any of the project alternatives. Moreover, the similarity of the air impacts associated with each alternative and the flexibility of the consultation process ensures that no particular institutional bias supported the preferred alternative or any other alternative. In short, both the Marine Corps and the State of California were free to disapprove the preferred alternative and to consider air impacts associated with other alternatives. That flexibility remains to this day.

The following discussion illustrates the 9th Circuit’s approach to timing of NEPA analysis: “As provided in the regulations promulgated to implement NEPA, ‘agencies shall integrate the NEPA process with other planning *at the earliest possible time* to insure that planning and decisions reflect environmental values, to avoid delays later in the process, and to head off potential conflicts.’ 40 C.F.R. § 1501.2 (emphasis added); *see also id.* § 1502.5 (‘An agency shall commence preparation of an [EIS] as close as possible to the time the agency is developing or is presented with a proposal....’).

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This is easily explained. If fewer OHV users visit Johnson Valley under Alternative 6 than under Alternative 4 or 5, those users will likely travel to some other OHV venue, taking their dollars with them. The EIS, therefore, must evaluate this "displacement" scenario for impacts on natural resources at the "substitute" venue(s) and for the economic loss suffered by local businesses near Johnson Valley. Note also that the EIS's discussion of recreational displacement impacts generally is very poor, even though data included in the EIS indicate that the proposed Project will contribute to the 30-year trend of reducing the space available for OHV-related recreation. (See Figure 3.2-6) During that period, acreage available for OHV recreation decreased by 48%; the proposed Project would effectively close the Johnson Valley OHV area, removing another 180,000 acres from public recreational use. The loss of so much recreational land simply shunts more people and more vehicles onto the few open areas that remain, placing added stress on their human and environmental resources, and effectively ruining the "wilderness experience" of those seeking an escape from urban life. These secondary impacts of the Project are real and the EIS must analyze them in detail. Currently, however, it fails to do so.

The EIS also provides little assurance that the Marine Corps will not arbitrarily close the RPAA area contemplated under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6. Nothing in the EIS or the Project generally indicates that this would not or could not happen. On the contrary, the EIS does not even describe the conditions under which such a closure would be allowed. Instead, the decision to close the RPAA appears to rest solely with the Marine Corps, with no right to appeal. In light of this fact, the EIS should (but does not) disclose that the Project's recreation impacts under Alternatives 2, 4, 5, and 6 may ultimately be identical to those of Alternative 1.

**F. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of Project-Related Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

The EIS includes a greenhouse gas (GHG) discussion (as part of the Cumulative Impacts analysis), but does not present a meaningful assessment of the project's GHG impacts. First, the EIS fails to provide a GHG inventory for the Combat Center, so there is no means to determine the base's existing carbon footprint or to calculate how much that footprint will grow once the Project is implemented. This kind of "project-to-ground" analysis is central to every NEPA analysis. Second, the EIS, for purposes of determining impact significance, compares the Project's GHG emissions against the total GHG inventory of the entire United States. Not surprisingly, the Project's contribution to the national total is very small, amounting to .00014%. Based on this number, the EIS concludes that the Project will have an insignificant impact on global climate change. (EIS, 5-33) Such an analysis is meaningless and unhelpful. No conceivable project – no matter how much GHG it might generate – will contribute more than a fraction of a percent to the national inventory of GHG emissions. Using the EIS's logic, then, no project would ever make a significant contribution to global climate change. For this reason, the significance criterion used in the EIS is invalid.

REC-1

AQ-1

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 13 of 18):

AQ-3 Continued:

Furthermore, (the Ninth Circuit) has interpreted these regulations as requiring agencies to prepare NEPA documents, such as an EA or an EIS, 'before any irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources.' *Conner v. Burford*, 848 F.2d 1441, 1446 (9th Cir. 1988); *see also EDF v. Andrus*, 596 F.2d 848, 852 (9th Cir. 1979)." *Metcalf v. Daley*, 214 F.3d 1135, 1143 (9th Cir. 2001).

In this case, only the emissions associated with the approved alternative were submitted to the air quality experts for their review and approval. However, any of the six alternatives could be subjected to the same or similar analysis if it were chosen, even still to this day. Only one alternative was submitted in order to maintain administrative efficiency and avoid unnecessary work requests to the State agencies. No irreversible or irretrievable commitments of resources were (or are) dedicated to the preferred alternative when the conformity analyses were submitted to the State and Federal air quality experts.

Neither MDAQMD Rule 2002 nor Part 93 of Title 40 of the CFR requires the EPA to formally approve the conformity analysis for this project. The Marine Corps provided EPA Region IX with its conformity analysis along with all other required recipients discussed in Rule 2002(E)&(F). This included publishing notice of the availability of the conformity analysis in locally published newspapers.

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Regardless of whether the EPA or any other federal agency has established significance thresholds for GHG emissions, the Marine Corps can and must develop significance criteria that are meaningful for this EIS. Ironically, the proposed project is located in the one state in the Union that has developed standards for evaluating GHG emissions on a project-by-project basis. The Marines should take advantage of this and use California's standards for determining the significance of the Project's GHG emissions. In fact, given that the Marines have asked for – and received – permission from the Mojave Air Pollution Control District to be included in the District's portion of the California State Implementation Plan, GHG emissions from the Combat Center and the proposed Project should be assessed using California's standards.

AQ-1

**G. The EIS Provides a Skewed Assessment of the Project's Adverse Impacts on the Local Economy**

The EIS contends that the Project will add 70 personnel to the existing population at the Combat Center, and that these 70 individuals will generate, collectively, \$4.5 million in county-wide spending, thus off-setting the economic losses caused by shutting down the Johnson Valley OHV area. This claim is hard to square with the fact that, according to the EIS, Johnson Valley OHV area experiences approximately 300,000 visitor days per year. (See, EIS, Table 3.2-9)<sup>9</sup> For the EIS's claim to be valid, each visitor would have to spend less than \$15 per day. This contradicts Table 3.3-8 of the EIS, which indicates that the average person spends more than \$31.00 per visitor use day.

SOC-1

The \$4.5 million attributed to new base employee spending, while not inconsequential, cannot compete with the \$338.8 million (in 2003 dollars) generated by recreational visitation, including OHV-related recreation, in the Mojave Desert Region. (See EIS Table 3.3-7, citing Economic Benefits study conducted by California Department of Parks and Recreation.)

More important, however, is the fact that the Project will have a disproportionate and devastating economic impact on those communities closest to, and most dependent on, the Johnson Valley OHV area – e.g., Lucerne Valley. (See, Table 4.3-13)<sup>10</sup> The EIS speculates that

<sup>9</sup> We believe the 300,000 annual visitor use day figure used is low by a factor of at least two. The figure is comes from the BLM, which historically underreports visitor numbers. Further, as pointed out in the EIS, Johnson Valley has a number of entry and exit points, most of which are not monitored by BLM. As a result, many visitors are never counted and the durations of their visits are not determined.

<sup>10</sup> According to Table 4.3-13, the Project, under Alternative 6 (the Preferred Project), would reduce recreational and film spending in the local community by 24.6% and local tax revenues by 24.7%. Given the small profit margins of most small businesses, this kind of drop in revenues would be devastating.

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 14 of 18):

**AQ-3 Continued:**

Section I, Last Paragraph: Although there have been informal suggestions that particulate matter (PM) could play a role in Upper Respiratory Tract Disease, there is no published literature that demonstrates a linkage. Therefore, inclusion of such a statement would be speculative. However, please note that text in the Final EIS has been revised to mention the potential for impacts to tortoises and other animals due to reduced plant productivity associated with dust deposition on leaf surfaces (see Wildlife, Desert Tortoise impact discussions). Note that the author of the studies on productivity and dust deposition noted that the summer rainstorms typical of the west Mojave ameliorate much of the dust impact (Sharifi 1999).

**AQ-4:**

Compliance with ambient air quality standards is determined by estimating the impacts of proposed emissions to “public lands” and not within the “facility” that contains these emissions. In the case of the DEIS PM<sub>10</sub> dispersion modeling analyses, the “facility” is defined as any location within the Combat Center boundaries proposed by each project alternative. Any location outside of these boundaries is considered to be “public lands”. The focus of the dispersion modeling analysis is to identify the maximum project PM<sub>10</sub> impact on public lands, which would occur immediately outside of these boundaries. This is the case, as due to the nature of atmospheric dispersion, “PM<sub>10</sub> disperses quickly over distance”, as acknowledged by the commenter. Therefore, the DEIS and project PM<sub>10</sub> conformity determination modeled PM<sub>10</sub> impacts appropriately.

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ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
May 11, 2011  
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these businesses will be able to make up the difference by serving non-OHV visitors on their way to Big Bear Lake. (EIS, 4.3-9) However, there is no evidence to support this contention. The EIS also argues that because Lucerne Valley has historically experienced a 20% turnover rate in its businesses, the community is accustomed to economic fluctuations and will adjust to the new reality occasioned by the project. (EIS, 4.3-9) Based on this rather flip analysis, the EIS concludes that the Project will not have a significant impact on Lucerne Valley or other local economies. Such a conclusion reflects both insensitivity to and ignorance of the economic realities facing the business owners (and employees) of Lucerne Valley and the other towns that rely on OHV-related revenues.

**H. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Water Quality**

As shown in Figure 3.13-1 of the EIS, the WSA is laced with washes, rivulets, and dry lake beds that receive and/or convey water during rain events. In addition, much of the WSA overlies groundwater aquifers. These water sources are critical to the vegetation and wildlife in the WSA. The EIS, however, does not describe the existing water quality conditions at these water sources. Nor does it provide anything more than a superficial analysis of the proposed Project's potential to contaminate these water sources with munitions constituents (MC) and hydrocarbons from fuel discharges.

**L. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Analysis of the Project's Impacts on Air Quality**

**1. Baseline Emissions.**

The method used to perform the Air Quality impacts analysis is highly-suspect. For example, when establishing baseline pollutant levels (including those for PM<sub>10</sub>), the EIS uses emissions levels from the Combat Center as measured in 2002, even though emissions data from 2009 are available. Of course, the 2009 emissions are substantially higher. The EIS discounts these, however, claiming that "the high levels of existing training exercises at the Combat Center would revert back to pre-war levels (before 2003)." (EIS, 4.8-2) There is no evidence offered in support of this assumption; and for purposes of NEPA, baseline conditions are those which exist at the time the EIS is being prepared, not those that existed at some arbitrary point in the past.

**2. Ozone.**

The EIS acknowledges that the proposed Project will generate ozone (O<sub>3</sub>) in quantities that exceed National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS), thereby requiring that the Marines subject the Project to a "conformity analysis." (EIS, 4.8-6) In this case, however,

SOC-1

WAT-1

AQ-2

AQ-3

Response to Comment N-18850 (Page 15 of 18):

**NEPA-6:**

The proposed action and alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Although the No-Action Alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action, it has been carried forward for analysis in the EIS as described in Chapter 4 under each resource area. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**NEPA-7:**

Section 2.8 of the EIS outlines several Special Conservation Measures that would be implemented as part of the proposed action to reduce impacts to resources areas. In addition, the EIS identifies mitigation measures that would be implemented under certain alternatives for specific resources areas to further reduce impacts.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**NEPA-8:**

In accordance with NEPA, the EIS discloses and analyzes the environmental consequences of the proposed action and alternatives under each resource area, as described in Chapter 4 of the EIS.

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the Marines did not perform a conformity analysis at all. Instead, they requested that the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (“MDAQMD”) and the California Air Resources Board (“CARB”) “include these emissions from Alternative 6 into the next O<sub>3</sub> SIP revision for the MDAB (MDAQMD 2010a and ARB 2011).” (*Ibid.*)<sup>11</sup> According to the EIS, this will ensure that Alternative 6 conforms to the SIP, thereby eliminating the “significance” of the Project’s ozone impacts.

There are two problems with this analysis. First, it was “pre-decisional” and therefore unlawful for the Marines to request that the MDAQMD and/or CARB include the ozone emissions from Alternative 6 (or any alternative) in the revised SIP. By making such a request, the Marines have signaled that they intend to adopt Alternative 6, regardless of the NEPA process. In other words, the current NEPA process is a sham and a charade. The die is already cast and the Marines will not be diverted from Alternative 6, no matter what the environmental analysis might show.

Second, any SIP revision – including the one requested by the Marines for this Project – must be approved by the U.S. EPA; and there is no evidence that this has occurred. Note, too, that EPA approval, especially with respect to local changes to SIPs, is never guaranteed. As the Imperial County Air Quality District recently discovered, EPA is more than willing to disapprove any portion of a SIP revision with which it disagrees. In light of these facts, it is incorrect to assume that the Project – i.e., Alternative 6 – conforms to the SIP for ozone.

3. Particulate Matter.

The EIS also acknowledges that the Project will generate more PM<sub>10</sub> than the NAAQS allow. (EIS, 4.8-6; 4.8-18) To address this impact, the EIS purports to conduct a conformity analysis pursuant to MDAQMD Rule 2202(H)(1)(d)(i). (EIS, 4.8-18) In this analysis, the EIS concludes that, under Project conditions, PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations at the boundary separating the WSA and the Combat Center would be 97 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. When these emission are added to background concentrations of 52 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, the cumulative total concentration of PM<sub>10</sub> is 149 µg/m<sup>3</sup>, just under the 24-hour PM<sub>10</sub> NAAQS of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

What makes this conclusion dubious, however, is that the Project’s PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, while measured at the WSA boundary, do not actually occur at that location or reach their highest concentration there. According to the EIS, emissions will be highest during the so-called “Final Exercise,” which will take place “in close proximity to the boundary of the Combat Center.” (EIS, 4.8-19) The EIS does not define “close proximity,” but it is safe to assume that it

<sup>11</sup> See also EIS, 4.8-18.

AQ-3

AQ-4

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means the exercise will not take place on the boundary itself, which is where the air quality model makes its measurements. Because PM<sub>10</sub> disperses quickly over distance, the actual emissions generated by the Final Exercise will not be fully captured if measured or modeled at the WSA/Combat Center boundary line.<sup>12</sup> As a result, the PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations described in the EIS are underreported. This, of course, directly affects the conformity determination, because if the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> emissions were measured/ modeled at the source – i.e., at the Final Exercise ground location – rather than at the WSA/Combat Center boundary, total PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations would surely exceed the NAAQS threshold of 150 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. Therefore, the EIS conclusion regarding the "insignificance" of the Project's PM<sub>10</sub> is in error.

AQ-4

**J. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Discussion of the No-Action Alternative**

The EIS fails to provide an adequate description of the No-Action Alternative; nor does it explain why the No-Action Alternative would frustrate the basic mission of the Marines. In fact, the EIS is largely dismissive of this alternative, even though NEPA *requires* that it be analyzed and considered. Worse, because the EIS does not provide a clear description of the No-Action Alternative and its effects, it is difficult to compare the other alternatives to it. Finally, the EIS should explore the possibility of improving MEB training within the confines of the No-Action Alternative. For reasons not explained in the document, this concept was not analyzed in the EIS. Note that this analysis must include a cost-benefit component.

NEPA-6

**K. The EIS Fails to Recommend Feasible Mitigation Measures to Offset Significant Impacts; EIS Findings of "Infeasibility" are Not Supported by Sufficient Evidence**

The EIS identifies a multitude of significant impacts that will result from the proposed Project. Only in the rarest of cases, however, does the EIS recommend mitigation measures to reduce or avoid those impacts. In all other instances (and most notably in the discussion of impacts to OHV recreation), the EIS simply concludes, without evidence or analysis, that the Marine Corps could not identify feasible mitigation measures and therefore does not intend to implement any. NEPA does not allow federal agencies, even the military, to sidestep their mitigation obligations so easily. For each significant impact of the proposed Project, the Marines must develop mitigation measures or demonstrate – *with evidence* – that such measures cannot be reasonable undertaken. The Draft EIS, as currently written, does not meet this standard.

NEPA-7

<sup>12</sup> The EIS itself admits that "PM<sub>10</sub> concentrations quickly decrease with distance from the Combat Center boundary." (EIS, 4.8-20)

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With respect to the Project significant effects on OHV recreation, the EIS cannot credibly argue that no feasible mitigation measures exist to offset these impacts. On the contrary, mitigation for such impacts is not only feasible, it's easy: The Marines can simply provide money to BLM and/or the OHV Division of the California Department of Parks and Recreation ("DPR") to purchase land near Johnson Valley for use as an OHV recreation area. Not only is the western Mojave Desert dotted with private in-holdings that could be acquired for this purpose, the OHV Division of State Parks has an actual program for purchasing such properties and turning them into OHV parks. So the EIS is incorrect in stating that there is no feasible means to mitigate the Project's impacts on recreation.

NEPA-7

**L. The EIS Provides an Inadequate Description of the Project**

The EIS does not quantify the extent to which the proposed Project will increase military training operations when compared to existing conditions. That is, the EIS fails to calculate and disclose the net increase in flight operations, tank miles traveled, troop exercises, ordnance expended, etc. resulting from the proposed Project. For this reason, it is impossible to fully comprehend the Project's potential impacts on the environment.

NEPA-8

**CONCLUSION**

As discussed above, the proposed Project cannot be justified in terms of military necessity or cost. And the EIS prepared in support of the Project simply does not meet the minimum analytical standards established under NEPA and controlling case law. In light of these facts, EcoLogic hereby registers its opposition to the Project and request that the Marine Corps scale back substantially its desire to expand the base at Twenty-Nine Palms.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this Project and the Draft EIS. If you have any questions concerning the content of this letter, please contact me at the address or phone number listed above.

Very truly yours,  
David P Hubbard  
of  
Gatzke Dillon & Ballance LLP

DPH:rlf

Comment ID: N-18851 (Page 1 of 2)

Comment ID: N-18851  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Date: May 24, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29-Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

As a property owner in Johnson Valley I am concerned with the impact of the 29-Palms Base Expansion and I feel there are significant areas of concern in the DEIS.

The DEIS estimates revenue lost due to reduction in OHV visits in the Lucerne Valley area, an historic agricultural settlement that is a close neighbor of the Homestead Valley; it also mentions the Town of Yucca Valley. They are described as "the nearest communities with any appreciable retail and traveler services presence that can support the purchasing needs of people visiting Johnson Valley." It is true that both have markets, fuel, restaurants and other services within a half-hour drive of the OHV area. But the DEIS is completely dismissing the presence of the commercial zone on Hwy 247 in Flamingo Heights that also enjoys a huge increase in business on the big weekends, and are even closer to the OHV area. These merchants and restaurants are very important to residents in the Homestead Valley. However, there is not enough local population to keep them in business. They rely heavily on travelers on Hwy 247, especially those enjoying the Johnson Valley OHV area.

DEIS does not report that most grocery stores operate on a profit of 3 to 5 percent. Loss of 7 plus percent, as is stated for the Lucerne Valley Market and Hardware, almost guarantees closure of the business. The smaller businesses in the Homestead Valley also would be severely impacted. When these businesses close, there will be no place for the residents to buy supplies locally. The document must be corrected to give the true picture of what the base expansion will do to these neighbors.

The DEIS compares loss of property tax from acquired lands to total county dollars received from taxes, rather than make the comparison with other rural desert communities' tax dollars. Therefore the reader is completely misled as to the true magnitude of the loss. Not only should the comparison be between rural desert communities, the preparers do not address what those lost dollars have been supporting, and how that loss will impact these communities (i.e. waste management, library, park, county services, etc.) The seemingly small number of tax dollars may just mean the difference between a facility remaining open or closed, or services being provided or not. The county of San Bernardino is already undergoing severe budget cuts, due to economic conditions that did not exist when these expansion plans were begun. Therefore the DEIS fails to accurately portray and evaluate impacts, and must be corrected to reflect real-time conditions, which are not forecast to change very soon.

The DEIS estimates creation of 90 new jobs, of which about 77 will be on base and 13 off base. The DEIS states lost merchant jobs and dollars from reduced recreational

SOC-1

SOC-2

SOC-3

SOC-4

Response to Comment N-18851 (Page 1 of 2):

**SOC-1 and SOC-4:**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley.

**SOC-2:**

Section 4.3 has been updated to acknowledge indirect impacts to other companies that provide services to local businesses.

**SOC-3:**

Thank you for your comment. Section 4.3 of the EIS has been updated to acknowledge the indirect effects of reduced property tax revenue.

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Response to Comment N-18851 (Page 2 of 2):

opportunities are not significant and will likely be made up by the new jobs created and more Marines moving in and out of 29 Palms.

As most of the new jobs, if not all, are likely to be located in the city of 29 Palms (the base headquarters) the preparers of this DEIS have ignored the impact of lost dollars on more distant communities in the Homestead Valley and beyond. Lost jobs in Lucerne Valley cannot be mitigated by a few jobs in 29 Palms. The death or near death of small but historic desert communities near the Johnson Valley OHV Area has not been given due consideration.

Therefore the DEIS fails to give a true picture of the very significant impacts on the job market in the Homestead Valley, and it must be corrected.

SOC-4

Sincerely,



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Comment ID: N-18852  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

WILLIAM R. RICHARDSON  
524 WINN DR  
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25 MAY 2011

NAVAL FACILITIES ENGINEERING  
COMMAND, SOUTHWEST  
ATTN: 29 PALMS EIS PROJECT MGR.  
1220 PACIFIC HWY.  
SAN DIEGO, CA. 92132-5190

... TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

I OPPOSE THE WESTERN EXPANSION OF THE  
TRAINING RANGE AT MARINE CORPS AIR GROUND COMBAT  
CENTER PRIMARILY FOR FOUR(4) MAIN REASONS.

1) SAFETY AND RISK MANAGEMENT CONCERNS  
NEED FURTHER STUDY. THE PROPOSALS INDICATE  
LIVE FIRE EXERCISES MOVING WEST TOWARD AN AREA  
OF GREATER POPULATION DENSITY. ACCIDENTS ARE  
GOING TO HAPPEN. THE USMC MUST REDUCE THIS  
RISK TO ITSELF AND THE CIVILIAN POPULATION.  
EXPANSION, IF NEEDED, SHOULD GO EAST.

2) NOISE PRESENTS A SIMILAR PROBLEM, AND ALSO  
NEEDS MORE STUDY, ON ITS IMPACT ON THE CIVILIAN  
POPULATION, AND THEIR REACTIONS. I TRAINED WITH  
1/4/11 AT MCRCC 29 PALMS, AND WE WERE REQUIRED  
TO SUSPEND FIRING IN DELTA CORRIDOR AFTER A  
SET TIME OF NIGHT. THIS WILL NOT MEET THE  
STATED GOAL OF TRAINING LIKE WE FIGHT."

P 1

Response to Comment N-18852 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. As outlined in Section 2.3 of the EIS, in accordance with the established Combat Center safety policy (Combat Center Order P3500.4h), any acquired lands would provide for at least 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) of buffer area between live-fire areas (including SDZs and WDZs) and any proposed or existing installation boundary.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). As indicated in the EIS, there would be significant impacts to desert tortoise under all alternatives. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Comment ID: N-18852 (Page 2 of 3)

P. 2

3) UPPER JOHNSON VALLEY HAS A GOOD POPULATION OF THE DESERT TORTOISE. THESE UNIQUE REPTILES ARE AT RISK OF EXTINCTION, SO IT DOES NOT MAKE SENSE TO CHANGE TO A LAND USE THAT WILL IMPACT THEM ~~BE~~ MUCH LESS FAVORABLY. THIS TOO, NEEDS MORE STUDY, WITH EMPHASIS ON SUPPORTING THIS VIABLE POPULATION.

4) BECAUSE OF ITS SIZE (THE LARGEST) AND ITS LOCATION (REASONABLY CLOSE TO POPULATION CENTERS) THE JOHNSON VALLEY OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE AREA IS A PREMIER RECREATIONAL AREA. ITS LOSS WOULD NOT ONLY GREATLY REDUCE OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECREATION, BUT ALSO WOULD REMOVE THE MONEY BROUGHT INTO THE NEAR-BY COMMUNITIES. IF TAKEN, IT MUST BE REPLACED BY AN AREA OF EQUAL OR GREATER VALUE AS AN OFF-ROAD RECREATIONAL RESOURCE, AND THERE ARE NO SIMILAR AREAS LOCATED NEARBY.

EASTWARD EXPANSION SEEMS FEASIBLE, POSSIBLY AS FAR AS THE ARIZONA AND CALIFORNIA RAILROAD TRACKS. STATE HIGHWAYS 62 AND 66 COULD BE LINKED AT THE NEW BASE EASTERN BOUNDARY, AND AMBOY ROAD CLOSED.

Response to Comment N-18852 (Page 2 of 3):

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Thank you for your suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18852 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18852 (Page 3 of 3):

P. 3

THE USMC COULD ALSO USE, ON A TEMPORARY,  
AS NEEDED, AND FOR SHORT PERIODS, PARTS  
OF THE OHV AREA WITHIN 2-3 MILES OF  
THE PRESENT BASE/OHV AREA BOUNDARIES,  
FOR STAGING TRAINING OPERATIONS, VIA  
THE AEM PERMIT PROCESS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION,

*William R. Richardson*

(FORMERLY MSGT, USMC, B-114-4)

(909) 985-2242 (H)

(909) 561-7686 (C)

**Comment ID: N-18853 (Page 1 of 2)**

Comment ID: N-18853  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Date: May 24, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29-Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

My family homesteaded in Johnson Valley in 1954, and we were very involved with starting the Johnson Valley Improvement Association (JVIA). The expansion of the 29-Palms Base will greatly impact this historic association and the many residents who it services.

The unincorporated community of Johnson Valley lies directly south of what became the Johnson Valley OHV Area over 30 years ago. JVIA volunteers built, maintain and operate the Johnson Valley Community Center, which is the hub of social and educational activities in this isolated and widely scattered settlement. It also served as an emergency center after the 1992 earthquake. Three meals a day for over two weeks were served to all comers, and those who needed shelter found it there.

The DEIS does not specifically address impacts on the Johnson Valley community, although researchers for the document and other Marine representatives repeatedly visited during the scoping period. Several focus group meetings were held in the Community Center building, overlooking the valley the Marines wish to close to public access. When the expansion plans were originally formed, the planners may not have known that citizens lived in Johnson Valley. But USMC representatives did come and meet them. They listened closely to the citizens' comments, and took copious notes. But the overwhelming impact of the proposed actions on Johnson Valley is not reflected in the DEIS. To a reader in another part of the US who may know nothing about the California high desert and its history, they are rated as less than significant, and therefore the document is misleading and must be corrected.

The Johnson Valley Community Center is largely supported by the breakfast it serves each Saturday (cooked and served by volunteers) to the "weekenders" who own property in Johnson Valley, and the visitors from the OHV area.

Page 557, Table 4.3-13 shows the estimated loss of 24.6% in direct expenditures in the area if the preferred Alternative 6 is chosen. This will be even greater for the Community Center during the two or more months the public would not be allowed access during training exercises. Those two months will be during Spring and Fall, which are the months of largest use of the OHV area, and attendance at the Saturday Breakfast. It is not unusual to serve 120+ guests on long weekends when the weather is good. It is not unusual to see that number dwindle to 40 in the high summertime.

Therefore the denial of public access to the remnant "shared use" area will inevitably reduce the numbers of guests at the Saturday Breakfast, as well as the number of potential

**Response to Comment N-18853 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge specific communities such as Wonder Valley and Homestead Valley.

Comment ID: N-18853 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18853 (Page 2 of 2):

property owners attracted to Johnson Valley. It will jeopardize the future of the JVIA and of the Community Center.

Therefore, the DEIS must be corrected to make it very clear to even the most cursory of readers that the economy, and very existence of Johnson Valley, and indeed the viability of all the historic Homestead Valley communities, are threatened under all Alternatives except #3, due to the closure or partial denial of public access to the Johnson Valley OHV area. It must also state that these impacts were not properly presented in the draft document.

Sincerely,

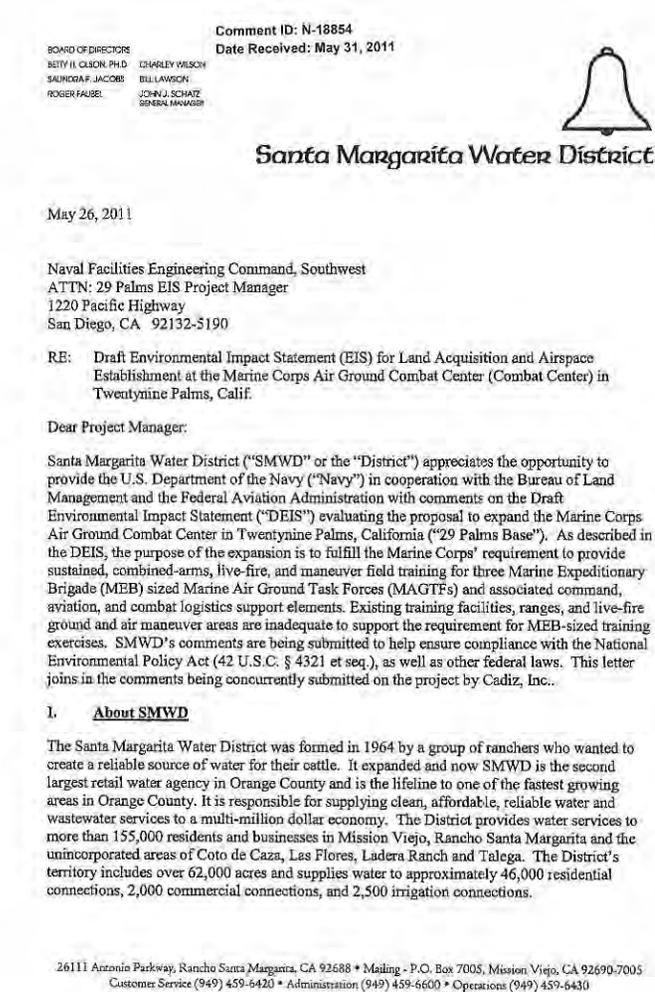


Stanley O Coutant  
248 San Gabriel Court  
Sierra Madre, CA 91024-2646  
626-355-4908

48654 Cholla Road  
Johnson Valley, CA 92285-2874

[stan@coutant.com](mailto:stan@coutant.com)  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

Comment ID: N-18854 (Page 1 of 3)



Response to Comment N-18854 (Page 1 of 3):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

WAT-1:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 would have a" regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project. The EIS also states that the project was uncertain and undergoing environmental review process. The EIS has been revised to update the project description for the Final EIS using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc. and others. These revisions are not likely to alter the significance of cumulative impacts from Alternative 3.

Comment ID: N-18854 (Page 2 of 3)

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
May 26, 2011  
Page 2

SMWD's Water Project Planned for the Cadiz Property

SMWD's interest in the proposed 29-Palms Base expansion relates to SMWD's water project on the Cadiz, Inc. property which is within the eastern expansion area included as part of Alternative 3 in the DEIS. SMWD is a project participant as well as the Lead Agency for the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project (Water Project) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. The Water Project is a potential new water source from a large, renewable aquifer located in the eastern Mojave Desert east of the existing military base. It is designed to manage the aquifer and conserve water from nearby watersheds otherwise being lost to evaporation in local dry lakes. Conserved water would be collected and delivered to SMWD as well as other participating water agencies. There would also be an option for carry-over water storage in the Cadiz Aquifer. The Project will diversify SMWD's water portfolio and help drought-proof the District to ensure its water demands are met regardless of the state's supply.

As SMWD is the Lead Agency for the Water Project currently underway, any action, including the proposed Alternative 3, is of serious concern because it may adversely impact the District's ability to move forward with the Water Project. To help the Navy understand the extent of resources presently committed to the Water Project, please see SMWD's website, available at <http://www.smwd.com/operations/the-cadiz-valley-project.html>.

**II. Concerns with Alternative 3 and Its Potential Adverse Significant Impacts**

NEPA compels federal agencies to consider the consequences of their proposed activities on the human environment, 42 U.S.C. § 4331. The statute requires federal agencies to produce a DEIS when proposing to engage in any "major Federal actions" that will significantly affect the human environment, 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C). See *Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc. v. Grant* (E.D.N.C. 1972) 341 F.Supp. 356, 366-67. A significance determination requires agencies to consider the context of an action and the intensity of its impacts. See *Environmental Protection Information Center v. Blackwell* (N.D. Cal. 2004) 389 F.Supp.2d 1174.

SMWD has the following concerns relating to the NEPA review and DEIS for the expansion project, particularly including its consideration of the eastern expansion in Alternative 3:

1. **Water Supply:** Impacts on Southern California's water supply: Selection of Alternative 3 would impact Southern California's water supply because it may prevent implementation of the Water Project. The Water Project which will improve water supply reliability by conserving the average annual sustainable yield of the local watersheds, and is critical for supply reliability for Southern California water providers. It will also reduce dependence on imported water by utilizing a source of water that is not dependent upon the California State Water Project (SWP), the Colorado River, or the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta). Therefore, and because of the nature of the base expansion including "live-fire maneuver training for three battalion task forces", we disagree with the DEIS's findings that the Project may co-exist with expansion under Alternative 3, and request that further analysis be commenced under the FEIS to evaluate the impacts it may cause. See DEIS, 2-95-96.

NEPA-1

WAT-1

Response to Comment N-18854 (Page 2 of 3):

**WAT-2:**

Section 4.13.4.1 addresses the potential impacts from Alternative 3 to groundwater quality, and concludes "because of the ongoing management and minimization of MC residues at the Combat Center and implementation of management and minimization of MC residues in the east acquisition area, impacts to surface water quality from Alternative 3 MCs would be less than significant." The low precipitation rate, intermittent receiving surface water bodies, and deep groundwater, limits the migration of MC residues and thus the potential impacts of use of munitions.

Chapter 2 of the EIS has been revised to include a more detailed description of the current range clearance operations. As discussed in Section 3.4.2.1, the Marine Corps' Range Environmental Assessment (REVA) program uses an EPA-approved screening model for Munitions Constituents in surface and groundwater. The REVA evaluation occurs every 5 years and the first reassessment began in October 2010. These evaluations have not found detectable levels of Munitions Constituents at the Combat Center.

**SOC-1:**

Thank you for your comment. Updated information on the Cadiz project and the effects of Alternative 3 have been added to the EIS in Sections 3.13 and 4.13.

Comment ID: N-18854 (Page 3 of 3)

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
May 26, 2011  
Page 3

2. Water Quality: Impacts on groundwater water quality: Alternative 3 would negatively impact the local groundwater quality because it creates potential for groundwater contamination from ammunition, bombs, fuel, hazardous chemicals that are used in military exercises on land that overlies the Cadiz Valley aquifer system within the proposed expansion area. These impacts were not adequately assessed in the DEIS and should be considered.

WAT-2

3. Impacts to Cadiz Operations and the Local Community: SMWD shares the concerns expressed by Cadiz that Alternative 3 may have on Cadiz, its operations, and the local community: impacts on energy production; impacts on agriculture; local socioeconomic impacts; economic impacts of land acquisition on the federal budget; transportation impacts; and impacts to biological resources. Please contact the District if you would like further explanation regarding these additional concerns.

SOC-1

III. Conclusion

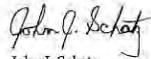
SMWD appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed 29 Palms Base and Environmental Impact Statement, and requests that the FEIS evaluates the concerns described above. Specifically, SWMD respectfully requests consideration of the following: 1) elimination of Alternative 3 from consideration and/or additional reasonable alternatives, 2) conducting further study and evaluation of impacts, 3) further discussion of appropriate mitigation measures, and take whatever further actions necessary to develop an DEIS in compliance with NEPA which can serve as the basis for informed decision-making and public scrutiny.

GEN-1

We request to be notified of any and all future actions regarding the DEIS, preparation of additional studies, as well as preparation of the FEIS. Please add me to your list of persons receiving notice of this project. You may contact me at [johns@smwd.com](mailto:johns@smwd.com).

Sincerely,

SANTA MARGARITA WATER DISTRICT



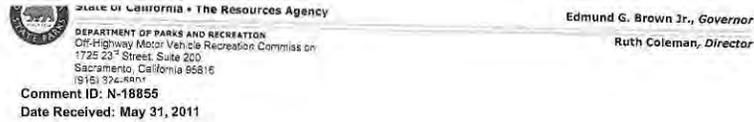
John J. Schatz  
General Manager

Response to Comment N-18854 (Page 3 of 3):

GEN-1:

Thank you for your comment. Responses to each of these issues are presented in the earlier portions of this letter.

Comment ID: N-18855 (Page 1 of 3)



May 27, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms DRAFT EIS Project Manager Chris Proudfoot  
MAGTFTC, MCAGCC  
Bldg. 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-9104

**RE: Comment Letter regarding Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Air Ground Combat Center**

Dear Mr. Proudfoot:

The California Department of Parks and Recreation, Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission (Commission) appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) for the Department of the Navy's "Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment" project, for the proposed expansion of the United States Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California (the "Combat Center").

This letter serves to address concerns the Commission has with regard to the impact the proposed project will have on the Californians whom the California Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Program (OHMVR Program) is established and mandated to serve. As stated in section 2.1 the Draft EIS identifies six action alternatives that would meet the Marine Corps' purpose and need for Military Expeditionary Brigade training capabilities. The Commission is concerned about the ramifications of all the proposed alternatives including specifically Preferred Alternative 6, and the long term impacts to OHV recreation in California.

The OHMVR Program has a substantial commitment and legislative mandate to ensure that the citizens of California have sustained opportunities for Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation. The OHMVR Program has longstanding cooperative relationships with various Federal, State and Local agencies, and in this case specifically the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), in support of, and providing financial assistance to, effectively managed OHV recreation areas.

Response to Comment N-18855 (Page 1 of 3):

**REC-1:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a Displaced OHV Recreation Study (DORS) to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

**SOC-1:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Comment ID: N-18855 (Page 2 of 3)

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page Two of Three

The Johnson Valley OHV area, managed by BLM, with financial assistance from the OHMVR Program, is an irreplaceable resource that will be substantially lost for OHV recreation should the proposed Preferred Alternative be implemented. Johnson Valley, at 189,667 acres, is the largest OHV area of its kind, not only in California, but in the Nation. In short, Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the premier areas among public lands that are managed to provide OHV recreational opportunities in California.

Johnson Valley provides a unique and irreplaceable OHV opportunity to over 150,000 OHV recreationists per year that would be displaced should the proposed Preferred Alternative be approved and implemented. We foresee closure of an OHV area of this magnitude as contributing to a very serious public safety issue when those displaced recreationists seek other places to ride. Displaced recreationists would be required to travel longer distances to smaller facilities, thereby increasing user density levels that would likely lead to increases in OHV related accidents, increased environmental impacts and increased trespass onto non-OHV public lands and private properties. Compounding the above concerns would be the devastating economic impacts associated with the loss of the Johnson Valley OHV area as it currently exists. All of the proposed alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative, if implemented, will have a significant effect not only in the Mojave Desert Region, but also outdoor recreation in all of California. During uncertain economic times, large state budget deficits, and closing 70 State Parks, reduction in any recreation area, as stated above, will have long term negative effects to the citizens of California.

With California's continued population growth, and the increasing popularity of OHV recreation, coupled with ongoing reductions in areas available for OHV use, we are concerned with any proposal that affects OHV recreation, but specifically the proposed Preferred Alternative 6 acquisition. Alternative 6 includes 146,667 acres of the 189,470 acres that is currently Johnson Valley OHV area. Of the 146,667 acres to be acquired, only 22%, or 38,137 acres, would be available for recreation 10 months of the year. This is unacceptable.

The OHMVR Program is charged by California's Legislature with the duty to support "sustained" OHV recreation activities for the citizens of California. Losing the largest and one of the most visited OHV venues in the nation will have a profound impact on maintaining that directive.

We recognize the many challenges facing the Marines and our Military during these tumultuous times and appreciate the security our forces provide for the citizens of the United States. We also recognize that you are mandated by the President and Congress to maintain a national military program that adapts training, management, and operational strategies to keep current with the various global threats which includes providing venues to conduct training. However, it is our mandate as stated above to support OHV recreation in the State of California. The Commission thanks you for taking the time to listen to our concerns and answering our questions during our OHMVR Commission Meeting in Ontario California on May 25.

REC-1

SOC-1

REC-2

NEPA-1

Response to Comment N-18855 (Page 2 of 3):

**REC-2:**

Comment noted. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**NEPA-1:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: N-18855 (Page 3 of 3)**

Mr. Chris Proudroot  
May 26, 2011  
Page Three of Three

In conclusion, the Commission strongly opposes all alternatives that reduce OHV recreation at Johnson Valley OHV area. The alternatives as written are unacceptable for our constituents. The Commission encourages the Marine Corps to look into other alternatives that would facilitate its training requirements without resulting in the loss of the important recreational resource at Johnson Valley. To the extent the OHMVR Commission may assist in this effort, we stand ready to do so.

NEPA-2

Thank you again for the opportunity to provide comment on the Draft EIS document.

Sincerely,



Eric Lueder, Chairman  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission

cc: Senator Diane Feinstein  
Senator Barbara Boxer  
Congressman Jerry Lewis

**Response to Comment N-18855 (Page 3 of 3):**

**NEPA-2:**

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Comment ID: N-18856 (Page 1 of 5)

Comment ID: N-18856  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

36456 El Camino Dr  
Palmdale, CA 93551  
May 19, 2011

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Freedom is what America was founded on. While I support the military and thank them for their service, I am opposed to land acquisition for the 29 Palms Marine base. To close Johnson Valley to recreation would be yet another example of removing people's freedom. This brings up a major deficiency in the Draft EIS published in February. **You failed to ever consider people's freedom, quality of life, feelings and beliefs as part of a sociological values analysis. You must explain why people live and play in such remote, isolated, and hot areas. Then you must fully analyze how your alternatives will impact those social values, beliefs, principles, emotions, and feelings.** The freedom to ride in wide open spaces is at stake. So is our ability to enjoy the quiet, peaceful, serene environment of the desert.

NEPA-1

I also have a comment about your views on mitigation. On March 26, I heard the Marine Corps representative tell the BLM advisory committee in Victorville, "Legally, our requirement is to not search for alternative places to accept the displacement. And at that point that's a legal mandate for our EIS process, meaning what you are really asking is if we support getting out, finding other areas, helping someone else designate the area. That's outside the scope of this project. That would take congressional action. As BLM looked at it, they might come and say we need to de-designate an area in order to open it up more for races. I think one was proposed earlier in this very meeting. But what I am saying is part of this proposed action, we are not required legally to come up with that particular alternative."

NEPA-2

**I wish to point out and remind you that according to Sec. 1508.20, mitigation includes:**  
(a) Avoiding the impact altogether by not taking a certain action or parts of an action.  
(b) Minimizing impacts by limiting the degree or magnitude of the action and its implementation.  
(c) Rectifying the impact by repairing, rehabilitating, or restoring the affected environment.  
(d) Reducing or eliminating the impact over time by preservation and maintenance operations during the life of the action.  
(e) Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments.

The Draft EIS is very inadequate in its discussion of possible mitigation measures, not only for the significant impacts identified but for ALL impacts (even those which are "less than significant"). It is improper for you to only feel that mitigation is needed for the significant impacts. In your website, you say "through the EIS process, mitigation measures would be developed to reduce or eliminate any significant impacts to specific resources areas." This is an erroneous interpretation of NEPA. **My first comment is that mitigation should be developed for ALL impacts, NOT just the significant ones.**

To back up my position, please refer to this document published by the Counsel for Environmental Quality: <http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/regs/40/11-19.HTM#19>

At question "19a" referring to "Mitigation Measures," the question is asked: What is the scope of mitigation measures that must be discussed? They say:

"A. The mitigation measures discussed in an EIS must cover the range of impacts of the proposal. The measures must include such things as design alternatives that would decrease pollution emissions, construction impacts, esthetic intrusion, as well as relocation assistance, possible land use controls that

Response to Comment N-18856 (Page 1 of 5):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to socioeconomics and cultural resources, and the interrelationship with the natural and physical environment potentially impacted by the proposed action. NEPA does not require consideration of social values, beliefs, principles, emotions and feelings.

NEPA-2:

In addition to the adoption of recreation SCMs (see Chapter 2 and Section 4.2.2.1), the Marine Corps considered potential mitigation measures but determined that none were feasible for impacts to Recreation. Numerous commenters on the Draft EIS stated that the Marine Corps should designate or obtain other lands in the region to mitigate the loss of OHV are in the Johnson Valley. The Marine Corps does not have the jurisdiction or capability to designate obtain other lands for OHV use and could not be committed to as part of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this action. The BLM has management jurisdiction over public lands. Designating lands for OHV use is a reasonable mitigation measure, therefore, the EIS has been updated to include text identifying designation of lands for recreation as a reasonable measure to alert BLM and encourage them to consider this during future development of Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Comment ID: N-18856 (Page 2 of 5)

could be enacted, and other possible efforts. **Mitigation measures must be considered even for impacts that by themselves would not be considered "significant."** Once the proposal itself is considered as a whole to have significant effects, all of its specific effects on the environment (whether or not "significant") must be considered, and mitigation measures must be developed where it is feasible to do so. Sections 1502.14(f), 1502.16(h), 1508.14."

In addition, I wish to point out that even if the USMC does not have the legal authority, funding, permitting, or other Department of Navy approvals to perform or ensure the performance of mitigation, which does not absolve your responsibility to present and analyze all possible mitigation in an EIS. **You must analyze all mitigation, and then clarify which measures are within the legal authority of the Marine Corps or one of your federal cooperating agencies (BLM, FAA). You must lay them all out for the public, Congress and the President to see and consider.**

While the EIS is very deficient in this regard, your other informational materials say that the estimated cost for land acquisition will be "approximately \$50 million for the smallest acquisition alternative." In your "Frequently Asked Questions" handout, it is stated that "Estimates will be developed for the various alternatives that will be studied in accord with NEPA, and this number continues to be an accurate estimate." **Where is this information provided in the EIS?**

When asked "Where would the money come from for any land acquisition?," that same document states that "The money for land acquisition would come from Congressional appropriations through the regular military construction program." **The EIS must fully lay out how much money is need, as well as the chances of obtaining it.**

I reference this information from the Counsel for Environmental Quality:  
<http://ceq.hss.doc.gov/nepa/regs/40/11-19.HTM#19>

"19b. How should an EIS treat the subject of available mitigation measures that are (1) outside the jurisdiction of the lead or cooperating agencies, or (2) unlikely to be adopted or enforced by the responsible agency?"

**A. All relevant, reasonable mitigation measures that could improve the project are to be identified, even if they are outside the jurisdiction of the lead agency or the cooperating agencies, and thus would not be committed as part of the RODs of these agencies. Sections 1502.16(h), 1505.2(c). This will serve to [46 FR 18032] alert agencies or officials who can implement these extra measures, and will encourage them to do so. Because the EIS is the most comprehensive environmental document, it is an ideal vehicle in which to lay out not only the full range of environmental impacts but also the full spectrum of appropriate mitigation.**

However, to ensure that environmental effects of a proposed action are fairly assessed, the probability of the mitigation measures being implemented must also be discussed. Thus the EIS and the Record of Decision should indicate the likelihood that such measures will be adopted or enforced by the responsible agencies. Sections 1502.16(h), 1505.2. If there is a history of nonenforcement or opposition to such measures, the EIS and Record of Decision should acknowledge such opposition or nonenforcement. **If the necessary mitigation measures will not be ready for a long period of time, this fact, of course, should also be recognized."**

NEPA-2

NEPA-3

Response to Comment N-18856 (Page 2 of 5):

**NEPA-3:**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**NEPA-4:**

Text has been updated in Section 2.8 and in specific resource sections to reflect a more detailed discussion of implementation of mitigation measures (e.g., funds will be requested from Congress to execute identified mitigation measures).

**NEPA-5:**

The Marine Corps has fully considered public comments in the development of the EIS, including the formulation of reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures. Numerous commenters on the Draft EIS stated that the Marine Corps should designate or obtain other lands in the region to mitigate the loss of OHV are in the Johnson Valley. The Marine Corps does not have the jurisdiction or capability to designate obtain other lands for OHV use and could not be committed to as part of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this action. The BLM has management jurisdiction over public lands. Designating lands for OHV use is a reasonable mitigation measure, and it is identified here to alert BLM and encourage them to consider this during future development of Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Comment ID: N-18856 (Page 3 of 5)

Furthermore, your EIS must fully describe measurable performance standards or expected results. To the extent that federal funding (approvals or resources) are required to implement the mitigation commitments, your EIS must analyze the likelihood of whether or not such funds are expected to be available throughout the life of the project.

NEPA-4

For several years, during the scoping period, and in your informational materials, you have consistently said that mitigation would be fully developed. Public suggestions included many possible mitigation measures. You must full explain why you have ignored public input and have not addressed the following items at a minimum. The EIS needs to be corrected so that these and other measures are considered:

- Purchase fee-owned properties in the proposed expansion areas. Clearly quantify the costs for doing this mitigation.
- Purchase reserved mineral interests in the proposed expansion areas. Clearly quantify the costs for doing this mitigation.
- Offer the numerous isolated properties owned by the BLM to those owners of private property who stand to lose their properties in the expansion effort.
- Identify specific replacement habitat to compensate for loss of wildlife and plant habitat.
- Permanently protect any identified significant biological resources with signing, fencing and other safeguards.
- Buy out the nearby Ord Mountain cattle allotment and the Stoddard and Shadow Valley sheep allotments so they can be permanently retired to mitigate for residual impacts to desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, and sensitive plants.
- Identify compensation for regulatory and processing fees for the relocation of utilities and other similar facilities.
- Provide for future access and underground mining of iron ore in the proposed expansion area.
- Purchase privately-owned property, in San Bernardino County and other surrounding counties, to compensate the OHV community for lost opportunity in Johnson Valley.
- Provide replacement wheeling areas at a ratio of 3 acres provided for every acre lost.
- Repeal the wilderness areas east of the USMC base so that expansion can be done in that direction.
- Analyze the potential mitigation of "Non-Wilderness Training Corridors" through the wilderness areas to facilitate the Marines accomplishing their training mission and objectives to the east of the base.
- Address and consider renewable energy development on military withdrawal lands. These are still "public" lands, and obstacles need to be identified and overcome. There are many disturbed areas on withdrawn lands, and your mitigation for withdrawing more public lands must identify which are suited for solar, wind and geothermal development. Develop an approach that allows the military to use revenue from the leases for base operations and maintenance. You (DoD) and Congress need to find ways to work

NEPA-5

Response to Comment N-18856 (Page 3 of 5):

Wildlife mitigation is being discussed in the ongoing Section 7 consultation. No utilities or other facilities are being relocated. No basis for the wheeling area replacement ratio suggested. Only Congress can de-designate a wilderness area, and it has not done so. De-designation also does not meet the selection criteria. Signing and boundary marking is addressed in the Land Use section.

Real estate transaction costs will not be fully known until negotiations with landowners are initiated, but that USMC has programmed funds in FY12 and FY14 to purchase non-federal land.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate lands as mitigation for the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

Comment ID: N-18856 (Page 4 of 5)

with the Dept of Interior and Dept of Energy to make this happen. Your EIS for base expansion needs to identify this as potential mitigation for Congress to be aware of and consider. If you are going to close more public lands to energy development, you also need to mitigate that by laying out the opportunities on disturbed military lands for energy development.

\* Provide better signing and marking of the base boundary. Faded signs and a few barrels are not adequate. Due to the number of scrappers and trespassers onto the base, the Marine Corps has proven for the past 60-70 years that they do not have the resources or inclination to properly manage their installation boundary. You must disclose and analyze the magnitude of this issue in the EIS. You must indicate how much bigger of a problem it is going to become.

The identification of areas to handle the displacement of OHV wheelers and other recreators is critical. Again, in your "Frequently Asked Questions," you told us in response to the question: "9. Where would the off-roaders go if the Marine Corps acquires the land?" that "The Bureau of Land Management and other land-managing agencies would determine other, suitable locations in the region for off-road vehicle activity."

Just when and where is that going to be done? As a cooperating agency, the BLM must do it now. It is imperative that the information be fully disclosed and provided to the public now in the EIS.

As a result of your proposal for increased military airspace, civilian aircraft will need to be re-routed. The EIS must disclose how this will be accomplished. You must work with the FAA to do this now in your EIS. You cannot afford to wait until they go through their process later, after your decision is already made. A wise decision cannot be made at present until the information from the FAA is incorporated into your EIS.

As a result of these unresolved issues, I feel that your EIS is so inadequate that you cannot proceed to a Final EIS. Rather, you must do additional study and analysis of possible mitigation and then issue another Draft EIS for public comment. Allow for 90 days of comment on this next edition of the Draft EIS.

You must revise the EIS so the mitigation is complete and Congress can make the right decisions. Despite BLM's recommendations against wilderness east of the base, Congress designated Sheephole and Cadiz wilderness areas. Your EIS is the vehicle that must lay out all alternatives, impacts and mitigation to facilitate better decision-making this time around.

You must also document a comprehensive plan for monitoring the project's mitigation commitments. I would recommend that in an appendix to the EIS. I presume the Marine Corps, BLM and FAA will all be performing some aspect of mitigation. Therefore, all three are responsible for developing and implementing the monitoring program, drawing upon public input and informing the public of the results and progress of such monitoring where appropriate. The EIS must fully analyze all potential mitigation, disclose which commitments can be made at this time, and also outline which pending measures will require other funding or resources to implement or develop.

You must commit in writing to use monitoring results in future NEPA analyses, so as to avoid relying upon mitigation measures that have proven ineffective in the past. Take Fort Irwin's

NEPA-5

NEPA-6

AIR-1

NEPA-7

Response to Comment N-18856 (Page 4 of 5)

NEPA-6:

Numerous commenters on the Draft EIS stated that the Marine Corps should designate or obtain other lands in the region to mitigate the loss of OHV are in the Johnson Valley. The Marine Corps does not have the jurisdiction or capability to designate obtain other lands for OHV use and could not be committed to as part of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this action. The BLM has management jurisdiction over public lands. Designating lands for OHV use is a reasonable mitigation measure, and it is identified here to alert BLM and encourage them to consider this during future development of Resource Management Plans (RMPs). The Marine Corps would provide any assistance that BLM may require from USMC.

AIR-1:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Comment ID: N-18856 (Page 5 of 5)

expansion, for example. Their tortoise relocation efforts were ineffective. Their commitment to monitoring triggered a project shutdown until further NEPA analysis was undertaken.

Your EIS is also inadequate in its recognition of the new "NEPA Guidance on Consideration of the Effects of Climate Change and Greenhouse Gases." That is available in draft form and is expected to be finalized later this year. You can read the draft document at:

[http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/ceqs/Consideration\\_of\\_Effects\\_of\\_GHG\\_Draft\\_NEPA\\_Guidance\\_FINAL\\_02182010.pdf](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/nepa/ceqs/Consideration_of_Effects_of_GHG_Draft_NEPA_Guidance_FINAL_02182010.pdf)

For proposed actions evaluated in the EIS, you must describe their consideration of the energy requirements of a proposed action and the conservation potential of its alternatives, 40 CFR 1502.16(e). Within this description of energy requirements and conservation opportunities, you must evaluate GHG emissions associated with energy use and mitigation opportunities and use this as a point of comparison between reasonable alternatives.

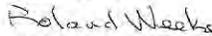
[http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/current\\_developments/docs/Mitigation\\_and\\_Monitoring\\_Guidance\\_14Jan2011.pdf](http://ceq.hss.doe.gov/current_developments/docs/Mitigation_and_Monitoring_Guidance_14Jan2011.pdf)

IN CONCLUSION, your EIS is currently inadequate and must:

- 1) Fully disclose and analyze all potential mitigation measures
- 2) Identify mitigation for all impacts, not just significant ones
- 3) Identify which mitigation can be currently committed to, and which will require additional funding, resources, approvals, permitting to develop or implement
- 4) Provide clear information on the costs and likelihood for each identified mitigation measure
- 5) Provide a monitoring plan for mitigation development, implementation and effectiveness
- 6) Fully describe & quantify energy requirements & conservation opportunities for all alternatives
- 7) Evaluate and quantify Greenhouse Gas Emissions associated with energy use and mitigation opportunities
- 8) Provide an impact analysis on sociological values, quality of life, beliefs, emotions, feelings, and lifestyles
- 9) Incorporate all needed information from the BLM and FAA at this time
- 10) Issue another Draft EIS that would allow for full disclosure and comment on all these items
- 11) Provide another 90-day public comment period and hearings when you have issued an adequate EIS

Thank you very much. Please put me on your mailing list for the next Draft EIS when you have prepared an adequate one which addresses these and all the other issues identified by the public.

Warmest Regards,



Roland Weeks

NEPA-7

AQ-1

GEN-1

Response to Comment N-18856 (Page 5 of 5):

NEPA-7:

In accordance with the CEQ regulations for implementing NEPA at 40 CFR 1505.2(c) and the Marine Corps' NEPA procedures in MCO P5090.2A Chapter 12, mitigation measures that were identified and evaluated in the EIS will be identified and committed to in the DoN Record of Decision (ROD). A monitoring and enforcement program will be adopted for resources in which monitoring is important to ensure that implementation is successful.

AQ-1:

Page 3.8-10 of the DEIS discusses the draft CEQ NEPA guidance for GHGs that is mentioned in the comment. While the Marine Corps did consider this guidance in the evaluation of proposed GHGs in the DEIS, they are not bound by it, as the CEQ has yet to finalize its content.

The GHG emission estimates presented in the DEIS are based upon fuel and therefore energy usages associated with each project alternative. The difference in fuel (energy) usages and therefore GHG emissions between the six project alternatives is no more than three percent.

The DEIS concludes that GHGs from each project alternative would produce less than significant impacts. As stated on DEIS page 5-40, the Marine Corps proposes a special conservation measure (SCM) that would maximize the use of biodiesel, where feasible, in equipment and vehicles that take part in exercises at the Combat Center under each project alternative, in place of ultra-low sulfur diesel (ULSD) or aviation fuels. The CO2e emission factor for biodiesel is about 7 percent lower than for ULSD, which is the unmitigated fuel evaluated in the DEIS air quality/GHG analyses.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 1 of 11)

Comment ID: N-18857  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 15, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Dear sir:

I have many comments of the Draft EIS due to your shortcomings in the Issues, Alternatives and Mitigations sections.

**ISSUES**

I have done a comparison of the issues brought up during scoping with those that you analyzed in the Draft EIS. Even if some issues are not relevant or applicable, you must acknowledge them in the EIS with an indication that you considered them and why they weren't further analyzed. Specifically,

**All Public Scoping Issues** – In each impact section, you typically state the public issues raised as "including but not limited to ...." Your EIS would be much better if you would acknowledge and list all the relevant issues that were raised by the public during scoping.

**Ground Movement** – You have failed to address this issue identified by the public. Your scoping report said you would study "potential impacts of ordnance to aquifers and geologic faults."

**DEIS Reclamation Plan** – You have failed to present a reclamation plan for all the areas that the Marines will be impacting due to erosion, vegetation destruction, etc. In addition, when you acquire contaminated lands, you must also present a plan (with costs) as part of your analysis. An example is on page 4.4-15 where you say "Land that would be acquired as part of Alternative 3 is known to have operations with the potential to contaminate the environment. An example is the America Mine, an open pit gold mine in the east study area that is no longer in use and could require cleanup." How do the Marines propose to do this. Cost?

**FAA Compliance** – You have failed to indicate how the FAA will reroute air traffic to comply with the greater amount of military airspace restrictions. In the scoping report you said you would study "Increased costs to the airline industry from flight corridor alteration and/or scheduling restrictions and conflicts." You have failed to do this.

**Airspace Issues** – On page 4.7-3, you only recognize the public scoping issues that were raised pertaining to airports and airfields. Please list all the relevant airspace issues that were raised in the 20,000 public comments received during scoping.

SCOP-1

GEO/WAT-1

SCOP-2

AIR-1

AIR-2

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 1 of 11):

**SCOP-1:** Thank you for your comment. The Scoping Summary Report you reference states that the EIS team would “consider and address relevant scoping comments during preparation of the DEIS.” This has been done and the relevant ones were analyzed in the EIS.

**GEO/WAT-1:** Ordnance-related impacts to geologic faults and aquifers are addressed in EIS Sections 4.12 and 4.13, respectively.

**SCOP-2:** Reclamation plans and plans to clean up contaminated sites are not required to be part of the EIS. The EIS does acknowledge in several places that the Combat Center’s INRMP (Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan) and other applicable management plans would be extended to include and apply to any lands acquired under the Proposed Action. The EIS also states (Section 4.4) that cleanup of any contaminated sites would be completed as part of the real estate acquisition process and would be performed in compliance with all applicable laws and regulations (e.g., CERCLA).

**AIR-1:** As indicated in the DEIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process. The potential for increased costs to the airline industry is acknowledged in Section 4.3 as an indirect impact of the action, but it could not be quantified because the details of any FAA re-routing were not yet available.

**AIR-2:** As stated in Section 4.7, the only scoping comment noted in comments received pertaining to airspace was the potential impact to airports and airfields. Section 4.7 addresses to the extent possible all anticipated and relevant airspace-related impacts of the project, whether or not they were raised during the scoping process.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 2 of 11)

**Examine impacts of action on existing land use plans** – You have failed to address how the expansion would trigger the need for many amendments and updates to existing Federal, State and local land use plans.

LU-1

**Examine Safety Issues of new boundary** – Management for the “RPAA” is not clearly defined. You fail to lay out the measures needed to ensure clear marking of the boundaries and to ensure public safety. Despite what you said in the scoping report, you have failed to fully study and quantify “the increased costs with installing proper signage in limited use areas and implementing an education campaign regarding location of remaining OHV areas.” The costs could be great and better spent elsewhere. You have also failed to fully study and quantify the “increased law enforcement costs to federal, state, and local jurisdiction with respect to enforcing trespassing on private property and other areas where OHV travel is not allowed.” Are the local jurisdictions able to bear these increased costs? Will taxes be raised?

PHS-1

**Cumulative loss to OHV** – You have not presented any trend analysis showing the cumulative loss of OHV area over the past four decades. This past, coupled with future foreseeable loss of OHV playground, must be examined as cumulative impact.

REC-1

**Impacts of Scientific Research** – You need to read and reference such documents as “Impacts of Military Vehicle Training Activities on Vegetation: Bibliography With Abstracts ERDC/CERL Special Report 01-17” by J.S. Fehmi, Tyrone Farmer, and J.A. Zimmerman. The available literature on impacts of military vehicles on military lands was surveyed. The bibliography has been divided into two parts: (1) military references developed from military vehicles or military lands and representing primary observations or research, and (2) supporting references that were not developed from the military but which have applicability to training activities on military lands by military vehicles or are derivative from primary works on the military. This report contains 61 references with abstracts.

BIO-1

**Quality of Life** – You mention air, water and scenic quality, but you failed to analyze one of the most important of all overall qualities to desert residents – quality of life. You must assess the impacts of the project on the quality of life and loss of “desert outdoor experience” in the area.

SCOP-3

**Environment Justice** – On page 4.3-29 of the EIS, you say “There are no specific concentrations of minority or low-income populations in the vicinity of the proposed action as defined by Alternative 6 and all socioeconomic or environmental impacts that are attributable to Alternative 6 would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status.” This is not an accurate statement because many of the people who live in Lucerne Valley, Landers, and Johnson Valley are low income compared to other areas. To better understand this, just look at the average cost of living and real estate costs there.

SOC-1

**Transportation and Circulation** – On Page 4.6-2, you say “There were no transportation and circulation issues raised during the public scoping period for this

TRN-1

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 2 of 11):

**LU-1:** Impacts associated with land use plans are addressed in Section 4.1 of the EIS.

**PHS-2:** The scoping summary report does not promise to “fully study and quantify” any particular issues raised by the public; it simply acknowledges those issues and states that relevant ones would be considered and addressed in the EIS. All of the issues cited in your comment have been acknowledged as potential impacts in the EIS, even if the costs could not be quantified at this time. Costs associated with implementing the proposed action would be addressed by DoD budget processes and congressional authorizations provided that Congress decides to proceed with the proposed action. Costs to implement the action are outside the scope of the EIS but will ultimately be a factor in final decision-making by DoD and Congress.

**REC-1:** A reduction of OHV lands in the region over time is acknowledged in the analysis in Section 5.4.2, which finds that cumulative impacts to recreation would be significant. A trend analysis to quantify the number of acres of loss over time was not required to support this finding.

**BIO-1:** Comment noted.

**SCOP-3:** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to recreation, socioeconomics, and cultural resources, and the interrelationship with the natural and physical environment potentially impacted by the proposed action. NEPA does not require consideration of social values, experiences, beliefs, or quality of life.

**SOC-1:** The analysis of environmental justice impacts is consistent with the standards and requirements of the executive order.

**TRN-1:** Thank you for the comment. The text has been revised for the FEIS.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 3 of 11)

EIS.\* This is simply not true. In your own scoping report, you stated that the following (at a minimum) were brought up by the public for complete study and analysis: 1) Increased usage of utility and infrastructure may impact current systems (e.g., disruption to traffic circulation, impacts to existing communications and energy transmission lines and pipelines, damage to utilities/infrastructure from vehicle movements). 2) Potential impacts to Fire and Police Department times and their ability to provide coverage for acquired lands. 3) Increased waste disposal requirements and the potential for the requirements to be unfulfilled. 4) Impacts on roadways, railroads, and airspace from movement of equipment and personnel to/from the installation for training events. 5) Injuries or impacts from convoy crossings of public roads.

TRN-1

**Carbon Footprint** - On Page 4.8-4, you acknowledge that the public raised an issue regarding "increased carbon footprint." However, you never addressed "carbon footprint" again other than to reference increased levels of carbon monoxide.

AQ-1

**Noise Issues** - On page 4.9-5, you only recognize the public scoping issues that were raised pertaining to noise from additional training activities. Please list all the relevant noise issues that were raised in the 20,000 public comments received during scoping.

NOI-1

**Renewable Energy Opportunity Costs** - You fail to acknowledge, quantify or assess the impacts of the lost renewable energy development opportunities due to the land closure. Your scoping report said you would analyze "Possible prevention of other development opportunities (e.g., solar and wind energy generators as well as geothermal exploration) on the lands being studied."

LU-2

**Loss of Future Mining Opportunities** - You fail to acknowledge, quantify or assess the impacts of the lost mining development opportunities due to the land's long-term closure. It is unacceptable to say that there is a potential for indirect impacts of this type to occur, but then to conclude that "such impacts are speculative in nature and the level of any such impact cannot be estimated at this time." You must work with the BLM to more adequately present the mineral resources that would be locked up due to military base expansion. On page 4.12-13, you improperly say that "Loss of access to inactive mines and unworked mining claims would not restrict the overall availability of mineral resources (gold in the case of the Vulcan and America Mine sites), so there would be no indirect impacts to mineral resources due to purchase of claims that are unworked or are associated with inactive mines." Any loss of access would, of course, restrict availability.

LU-3

**Devaluation of surrounding private property** - Living near a military base and the resulting noise and safety issues WILL result in devaluation of property. Your analysis is incorrect to conclude, "If property values were to decline as an indirect impact, the reduction would likely be marginal and less than significant." Your scoping report said you would analyze "Decrease in property value of homes and land located near the expansion area." You have also failed to analyze the direct impact of devaluation on Wonder Valley properties.

SOC-2

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 3 of 11):

**AQ-1:** Page 3.8-10 of the DEIS states that the potential effects of proposed GHG emissions are by nature global and cumulative impacts and that the impact of project-induced GHG emissions to global climate change is discussed in the context of cumulative impacts in Chapter 5 of the DEIS. Section 5.4.8 of the DEIS presents GHG emission estimates for each project alternative and an evaluation of their cumulative impacts. See also responses to comment SCOP-1 and PHS-2 above.

**NOI-1:** Text has been revised for the FEIS to include other relevant noise issues raised during scoping, as applicable.

**LU-2:** Thank you for your comment. The scoping summary report does not promise to address in the EIS any or all particular issues raised by the public; it simply acknowledges the issues raised and states that relevant ones would be considered and addressed in the EIS. This has been done and the relevant ones were analyzed in the EIS. Numerous renewable energy projects have been proposed in the vicinity of the project areas and these are addressed in Section 5.3.2. There is no basis for speculating that the proposed acquisition would necessarily preclude some hypothetical future energy project that could not be accommodated elsewhere in the desert region.

**LU-3:** Additional information about mining impacts has been added to the FEIS.

**SOC-2:** Per input from other commenters, information about Wonder Valley has been added to the FEIS. The EIS does analyze the property value issue, albeit qualitatively, and acknowledges that some impact would occur. The impact is not expected to be significant. Additional text has been added to further support this finding. DoN stands by the analysis of impacts to property values.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 4 of 11)

**Traditions / Archeological and Historical** – On page 4.11-2, you say “During the public scoping process for this proposed project, no comments were received from the public regarding cultural resources.” How can this be? Didn’t the Tribes present some issues? Also your own scoping report says these issues were raised: 1) Impacts to cultural resources of the region, including artifacts, historic cabins, and historic mining/freighting sites. 2) Potential destruction or elimination of significant archaeological and religious sites. 3) Violation of tribal concerns and rights, which includes the access to culturally significant sites and the compromise of culturally significant sites and their settings. 4) Possible destruction or elimination of historic structures and/or districts, including potentially historically important mines. 5) Potential impacts to various plant species historically used by Native Americans for subsistence. The impacts to all these items and more (like the historic values of Highway 242) need to be fully disclosed in the EIS.

**Access for Other Activities** – While you mention some activities like hiking, sightseeing and geocaching, you have failed to acknowledge the use of this land by so many others (scouts, model rocketry clubs, ultralite aviators, hang-glders, landsailers, rockhounds, equestrians etc.) The Partnership for Johnson Valley can fill you in on all the uses that take place out there.

**Accuracy/Adequacy of the Economic Analysis** - The Yucca Valley City Council has better economic data indicating an impact of at least \$5 million. The Johnson Valley Usage Survey that was done at the King of the Hammers shows \$1.6 million dollars spent in the area during the of the 2011 race week alone. Those survey results are very conservative. The economic impact for the communities along Hwy 18, 247 and 62 will be many times more than that \$1.6 million. The economic impact of the Marines going east would be minimal and maybe not even be negative. You need to correct that section in the EIS and also recognize that certain impacts (especially in the cities and towns of the high desert) will be significant as incomes and revenues decline, and businesses fail.

**More of a BLM lead even though it is a military EIS** – Even though BLM is a cooperater, the EIS is inadequate because it appears they have not provided you with information regarding lost energy development opportunities, mineral resource development opportunities, or areas that can be expanded or opened to wheeing as a result of the loss of Johnson Valley.

**Impacts to other current land uses** – You have failed to fully analyze the impacts on the railways, gas lines, SCE distribution lines and facilities, and especially all the impacts on rights-of-way, easements, and other land uses and authorizations/designations in all three study areas. Your scoping report said that you would do this.

**Costs** – You need to fully evaluate, quantify and disclose **ALL COSTS** for:  
a) enforcing OHV laws and dealing with illegal riding in other areas.  
b) signing and education campaigns.

CR-1

REC-2

SOC-3

NEPA-1

LU-4

NEPA-2

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 4 of 11):

**CR-1:** The text has been revised in the FEIS to acknowledge cultural resource issues that were raised during scoping.

**REC-2:** All of those activities are acknowledged in the DEIS in Section 3.2.

**SOC-3:** Comment noted. The analysis and text of Section 4.3 has been revised for the FEIS.

**NEPA-1:** Comment noted.

**LU-4:** Comment noted. Please see response to comments SCOP-1 and LU-2 above.

**NEPA-2:** Cost/benefit analyses are not required to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed action. Decision-makers in the DoN and Congress will consider many different factors and sources of information in their decision-making, including costs, benefits, national priorities, etc. Such issues are outside the scope of the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the national deficit or debt is also outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 5 of 11)

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 5 of 11):

- c) real estate acquisition.
- d) mine acquisitions.
- e) hazardous material contamination reviews of lands and mines to be acquired.
- f) cleaning up all contaminated lands acquired.
- g) relocating utility lines.
- h) closing Amboy road under alternate 3.
- i) lost renewal energy development opportunities.
- j) lost mineral development opportunities.
- k) mitigating the lost Johnson Valley OHV lands with replacement lands for wheeling.
- l) grazing rights acquisitions.

NEPA-2 continued

How can a good decision be made without knowing the costs associated with each alternative? The government does not have an open checkbook. You must clearly show (in dollars and cents) the costs and benefits for each option.

**ALTERNATIVES**

During the scoping period, the public suggested various alternative actions the USMC could consider, as well as suggested modifications to the currently proposed scoping alternatives.

You have failed to analyze a full range of reasonable alternatives because you have not looked at alternatives to:

- 1) **Repeal the three wilderness areas near the base (Cleghorn, Sheephole, Cadiz).** Why wasn't the repeal of wilderness studied as an alternative? Explain this to the public in the EIS. Why doesn't an alternative analyze the opening of National Park or wilderness land for Marine training? Isn't it true that Congress made them so Congress can take them away? That would open up lots of land east of the base for Marine training. General Patton used that ground for tank training back in WWII days. It was good enough for him. Marines would have to shut down Amboy Road for a few days, but I can live with that. Ask them to analyze opening Sheephole, Cadiz, Cleghorn and even more wilderness. Why can't the Marines use those? In the 1500 pages of "legislative history" section for that law: [http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/documents/legislativehistory/111\\_11\\_SH\\_0723\\_87.pdf](http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/documents/legislativehistory/111_11_SH_0723_87.pdf) At page 862 a BLM COMMENT to some allegation say: "Several wilderness amendments in the 1981 and 1982 period were intended to be a further refinement of preliminary BLM decisions. The changes referred to were based on new data, reconsideration of existing data, and a public opinion. The changes and alternatives were analyzed in a draft and final environmental impact statement, and represent about a 10 percent decrease in the area recommended suitable (from 2.1 to 1.9 million acres). For each WSA the Record of Decision gives the rationale for the change.....The largest area dropped was Sheephole/Cadiz (WSA 305) which had been impacted by World War II military maneuvers and lacked wilderness qualities. The subsequent environmental impact statement

NEPA-3

**NEPA-3:** Sections 2.3 and 2.7 of the EIS explain the process of identifying reasonable alternatives that would at least minimally satisfy MEB training requirements and the alternatives selection criteria defined by the Marine Corps. During the NEPA process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Following the scoping process, the Marine Corps responded to public input by identifying Alternative 6 as a workable alternative that would satisfy training requirements while also making additional land available to the public approximately 10 months per year.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 6 of 11)

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 6 of 11):

was neither protested or appealed." BLM NEVER RECOMMENDED THOSE AREAS AS WILDERNESS! THOSE AREAS SHOULD NEVER BEEN DESIGNATED IN THE FIRST PLACE! THEY NEED TO BE REPEALED NOW TO ALLOW FOR USMC TRAINING THERE!

- 2) Provide for "Non-Wilderness Training Corridors" through the wilderness areas. According to that link Mike sent, there was a ton of new wilderness areas created by California Desert Protection Act of 1994 - Public Law 103-433 (10/31/1994). <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?..derness%20Laws> There is a special provision in that law for the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness next to the base. See: [http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?..D=0&CID=0&key= \(13\)](http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?..D=0&CID=0&key= (13)) Certain lands in the California Desert Conservation Area, of the Bureau of Land Management, which comprise thirty-three thousand nine hundred and eighty acres, as generally depicted on a map entitled "Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness—Proposed", dated July 1993, and which shall be known as the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness. The Secretary may, pursuant to an application filed by the Department of Defense, grant a right-of-way for, and authorize construction of, a road within the area depicted as "nonwilderness road corridor" on such map. Has this road has already been built for Marine training through the Cleghorn wilderness? If not, the Marines should build it now and train there. Even if they don't admit their mistake and repeal the wilderness designations, maybe congress can create more "nonwilderness corridors" in Cleghorn, Sheephole AND Cadiz Dunes to help the Marines better train east of the base? The EIS must consider this.
- 3) Only expand into the NORTH half of Johnson Valley. You studied an alternative (#2) that expanded into the east half of Johnson Valley. That one doesn't make much sense to me. The Marines should be more adaptable and able to accomplish all their training objectives north of Emerson Lake. Why can't the Marines leave the whole area in the south for us wheelers? Run that 3rd (southern) brigade from the base through the channel just south of Emerson Lake (north of Hartwell Hills, Los Padre and Blue Ribbon mines). Please see the attached map. The Marines would still get the necessary of training time. All 3 brigades would still be able to converge together at red map dot ("MEB objective") during their couple training exercises. This new alternative would only require Marines to expand into about 60,000 acres of Johnson Valley. It would leave over 120,000 acres for wheelers to continuing riding in. You must develop and fully study another alternative to consider this.

NEPA-3  
continued

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS/QUESTIONS

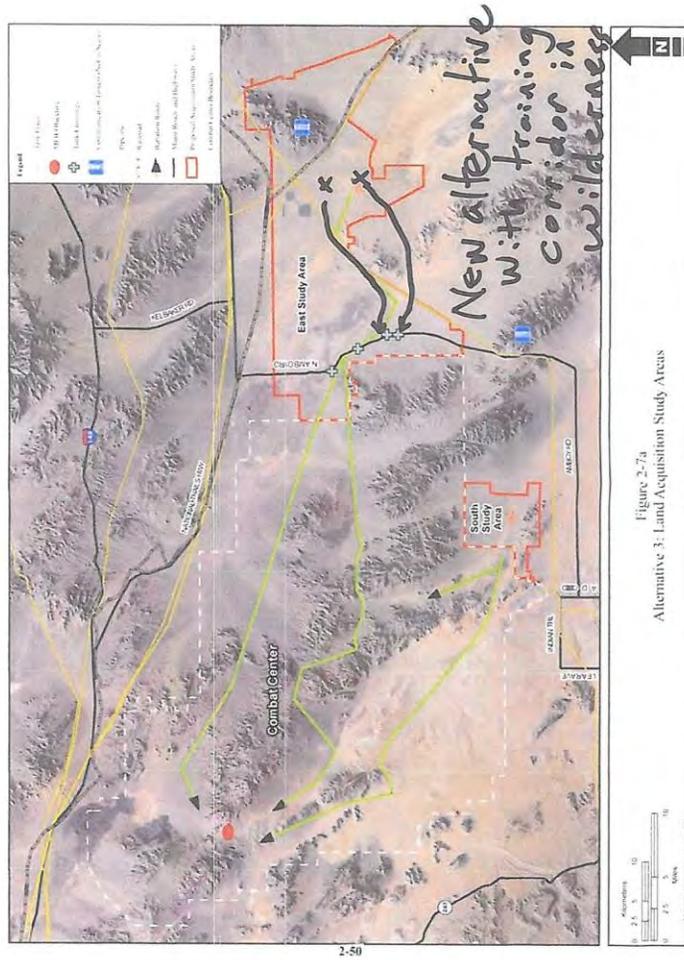
1) How much is it going to cost to buy 100+ private properties? At the public meetings, I was told that land acquisition cost alone would be about \$50 million for the smallest acquisition alternative. You FAQ document on-line also says that "Estimates will be developed for the various alternatives that will be studied in accord with NEPA, and this

NEPA-4

**NEPA-4:** Cost/benefit analyses are not required to assess the environmental impacts of a proposed action. Decision-makers in the DoN and Congress will consider many different factors and sources of information in their decision-making, including costs, benefits, national priorities, etc. Such issues are outside the scope of the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the national deficit or debt is also outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 7 of 11)

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 7 of 11):



Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 8 of 11)

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 8 of 11):



Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 9 of 11)

number continues to be an accurate estimate." This has not been done and needs to be ASAP.

NEPA-4 continued

2) I just can't understand why you guys say the economic impacts are "less than significant." The expansion takes over 100 private properties, closes mines, reduces sales & tax revenue, results in some business going under. Lucerne Valley could become a ghost town if they lose \$1.5 million or -25% compared to baseline due to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Why is it "significant" in the EIS to take 154-714 desert tortoises but "less than significant" to take that many private properties, mines, businesses? People are endangered species too. Taking one private property or closing one business is definitely significant in my book.

SOC-4

3) How much is it going to cost to buy out the miners?

NEPA-5

4) Why wouldn't the noise from the tanks, bombs, aircraft, and artillery be significant?

NOI-2

5) How did the EIS come up with just 300,000 visitors in Johnson Valley? You failed to recognize many other uses there.

REC-3

6) How do the airlines feel about more restricted airspace over the desert?

AIR-3

7) Your 1500+ page EIS treatise was not written for clear public understanding and discourse. You are not in compliance with the NEPA law. Instead, your EIS was development specifically with the goal of baffling the public with complex, technical, rambling and redundant bureaucratic obfuscation and gobbledygook. Your use of acronyms and insider military jargon is atrocious. For one example, what do these significant impacts (from the Executive Summary section) mean? They are even more difficult to understand in the airspace section. Explain these (and all the impacts) in terms that the public can understand: "Minimal to moderate impacts on Victor airway and moderate to significant impacts on jet route IFR air traffic within or adjacent to new and modified SUA. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on routes used by general aviation VFR aircraft. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on public airports and instrument approach procedures within close proximity to SUA. □ Minimal to moderate impacts on private airfields within, beneath, or bordering SUA."

NEPA-6

8) The EIS must study the location of OHV areas that can be expanded or created, to make up for acreage loss in Johnson Valley. The EIS must address and propose possible mitigation for the public values lost. If recreation use is simply displaced without providing alternative areas for use within the same travel parameters, then the EIS must address the costs to both BLM and local law enforcement agencies to deal with trespass and resource damage that would likely occur.

REC-4

9) The EIS must study the possibility of BLM selling some surplus land and then use the income to buy land for wheeling.

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 9 of 11):

**SOC-4:** Comment noted. The rationale used to analyze socioeconomic impacts is described in Section 4.3 of the EIS.

**NEPA-5:** Please see the response to comment NEPA-4 above.

**NOI-2:** The rationale used in the analysis and modeling of noise impacts is described in Section 4.9 of the EIS.

**REC-3:** Section 4.2.1 of the EIS acknowledges incomplete or unavailable information; therefore, in accordance with CEQ regulations the Marine Corps conducted interviews with BLM and other key recreation organizations and stakeholders to obtain reliable data and assumptions on annual visitor-days of use. The Marine Corps worked closely with BLM to develop reasonable assumptions for estimated visitor-days of use in Johnson Valley as described under each action alternative. These assumptions were approved by BLM staff knowledgeable about and responsible for recreation management of the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

**AIR-3:** Please see the response to comment AIR-1 above.

**NEPA-6:** Comment noted. The proposed action is complex and has many components. To characterize the affected environment and potential impacts, sufficient detail needed to be included in the EIS. The EIS was developed with the intent to balance readability with sufficient technical information. The Executive Summary provides a brief overview of the project alternatives and the general types of impacts. It is not intended to stand on its own without the rest of the EIS.

**REC-4:** The Marine Corps has fully considered public comments in the development of the EIS, including the formulation of reasonable alternatives and mitigation measures. Numerous commenters on the Draft EIS stated that the Marine Corps should designate or obtain other lands in the region to mitigate the loss of OHV are in the Johnson Valley. The Marine Corps does not have the jurisdiction or capability to designate or otherwise obtain lands for OHV use and could not be committed to such an effort as part of the Record of Decision (ROD) for this action. The BLM has management jurisdiction over public lands. Designating lands for OHV use is a reasonable mitigation measure, and it is identified here to alert BLM and encourage them to consider this during future development of Resource Management Plans (RMPs).

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 10 of 11)

- 10) For mitigation, the EIS must identify the possibility of Congress creating a \$10-20M/year (or more) appropriation for OHV land purchase, management of dual-use area, law enforcement, education and outreach programs to prevent illegal riding etc.
- 11) The EIS must include a full justification for the expansion. Much of the justification that the County and public have seen to-date in preliminary presentations involves the need for large units and large-scale ground maneuver training. The Department of the Navy should assess the warfare situations that may likely face Marines in the next 25 years and whether the more likely future scenarios will be similar to the current engagements of small units in semi-urban settings.
- 12) DEIS says the expansion will have no visual impacts to the residents of the area. The glaring lights of Baghdad City and newly installed beacons are already an impact, and they are on the existing base. New beacons and desert maneuvers will light up our dark skies even more, and this needs to be addressed.
- 13) There will also be lack of restriction from the airspace above our homes. Low flying helicopters are already terrible. The EIS must address this.
- 14) As far as the escalating noise is concerned, the EIS projects doubling ordnance activity including dropping bombs from aircraft. There is no mention of vibrations in the EIS. You must study and quantify: 1) broken windows miles from the explosions, 2) empty tortoise shells near the border, 3) an increase in anxiety levels among the neighbors.
- 15) Under Cultural Resources, the EIS does not mention the historic eligibility of Johnson Valley or other neighboring homestead communities, and the impact of the light, noise and vibration on them. The recent 150 mph wind dramatizes the likelihood of disruption of training schedules. Accuracy hitting the targets can be questioned with unpredictable high winds. The last bombardment right near the border with Johnson Valley makes this idea even scarier.
- 16) How will the taking of private land, grazing rights and mining claims be compensated for?
- 17) How is 29 Palms planning to deal with the liability risk at events?
- 18) What restrictions will be placed on people trying to hold events on this "dual use" land?
- 19) What will the BLM role be, if any, in permitting & managing events in the dual use area?
- 20) Illegal OHV use on private land will increase. What will 29 Palms and BLM do (if anything at all) to help curtail this activity?

- REC-4 continued
- NEPA-7
- VIS-1
- AIR-4
- NOI-3
- CR-2
- NEPA-8
- NEPA-9
- NEPA-10
- NEPA-11
- NEPA-12

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 10 of 11):

**NEPA-7:** The purpose and need for the proposed action are described in Section 1.3 of the EIS. Decision-makers in the DoN and Congress will consider many different factors and sources of information in their decision-making, perhaps including national defense priorities and future requirements. Such issues are outside the scope of this EIS.

**VIS-1:** Section 2.2 of the EIS has been updated to clarify the use of lighting during proposed training activities. Section 4.5, which discusses impacts to visual resources, has been updated as appropriate.

**AIR-4:** Comment requires clarification. Airspace-related impacts are addressed in Section 4.7.

**NOI-3:** Additional analysis and text have been added to the FEIS to address vibrations from noise.

**CR-2:** Text has been added to Sections 3.11 and 4.11 to address homestead properties as a potential cultural resource.

**NEPA-8:** Any acquired properties would be paid fair market value.

**NEPA-9:** As described in Section 2.5, the Marine Corps proposes a variety of safety measures and management procedures under Alternatives 4, 5, or 6 to focus on the safety of visitors to any restricted public access area (RPAA). For any permitted race events that may occur within an RPAA, the Marine Corps would manage the area similarly to how the BLM manages races currently; i.e., with permits, insurance requirements, etc., that require race promoters to assume the liability for the safety of people attending their events.

**NEPA-10:** Some preliminary restrictions have been proposed in Section 2.5 of the EIS, but the Marine Corps would develop appropriate use restrictions in consultation with affected stakeholders should Alternatives 4, 5, or 6 be implemented.

**NEPA-11:** At this time any potential role for the BLM is undefined.

**NEPA-12:** As a result of public and agency comments received on the DEIS, the Marine Corps conducted a Displaced OHV Recreation Study (DORS) to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity). Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS, along with any recommended mitigation strategies.

Comment ID: N-18857 (Page 11 of 11)

Response to Comment N-18857 (Page 11 of 11):

21) Why can't some wilderness be opened for OHVs? If they just have to train in Johnson Valley, get rid of the wilderness but then open it for wheeling. Open 3 acres of wilderness to wheelers for every acre lost in Johnson Valley. There's already way too much wilderness. Hardly anyone goes there. They are not accessible. How many people hike, camp or ride horses in them? The EIS must develop mitigation of opening wilderness areas. Analyze the current wilderness use that would be lost, as well as the OHV use to be gained by opening them to wheeling.

22) Where can current OHV areas be expanded? There might be a way to expand Stoddard, Razor and others. 29 Palms and BLM need to study this.

23) Where can new OHV territory be created? A 3:1 ratio was suggested at BLM advisory committee meeting (3 new acres opened, for every acre closed). The law requires they look at mitigation. Where does the EIS talk about expanding or creating new areas for riding? If 150,000 acres are lost in Johnson Valley, the EIS should suggest congressional designation for 450,000 acres OHV area. Some ideas are: Expand Stoddard to south. Expand Razor to west. Designate Dumont Dunes, Dove Springs, Jawbone Canyon, Keysville, Spangler Hills, El Mirage, Glamis, Imperial Dunes etc. What other areas can be designated? What areas have been closed in the past that can now be re-opened? There are a million acres to consider nationwide. Lawmakers can pick 450,000 acres from that.

24) Please go east or don't expand at all.

25) Please address these comments in the next draft of the EIS.

26) Please add me to your mailing list for a copy of the Final EIS.

Sincerely,  
Ronald Siddert  
39553 Hawthorne St  
Palmdale, CA 93551

REC-5

NEPA-13

NEPA-14

NEPA-15

**REC-5:** Please see the response to comment REC-4 above.

**NEPA-13:** Comment noted.

**NEPA-14:** All comments received on the DEIS were reviewed and addressed during preparation of the FEIS.

**NEPA-15:** Your contact information has been added to the mailing list as requested. The Marine Corps appreciates your comments and your involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 1 of 8)

Comment ID: N-18858  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 20, 2011  
38167 Desert Hawk Dr  
Palmdale, CA 93552

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

To whom it may concern:

As an advocate for responsible off-highway vehicle recreation and the Marine Corps also, I feel that there is room to the east of 29 Palms and think the Marines should expand there.

As far as your Draft EIS, I have some serious concerns about the validity of many of your assumptions used in the analysis:

Chapter 1, page 24 and Chapter 2, page 1: It is assumed in this EIS that by the time the proposed action were implemented (approximately 2015), requirements for EMV iterations would likely be reduced to align with pre-war CAX levels of about 4-5 EMV-equivalent exercises annually. This expected reduction would be offset by the increase in MEB Building Block training (see Section 2.1), such that the overall training throughput of tenant and transient units up to a single battalion in size would approximate 2010 levels.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be nothing like their 2010 budget. Assumptions must be clearly tied to reasonable budget projections. As the Defense Department seeks additional cost cuts to support President Barack Obama's deficit-reduction efforts, weapons systems, major procurement programs, acquisitions, and contracted goods and services will all be on the table to find ways to increase buying power. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing in 2015.

Page 2-35: The vehicle mileage assumed during Building Block training is encompassed in the Air Quality baseline modeling (see Appendix G).

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be reduced. Combined with the increasing costs of gas, you need to assume less vehicle use as a part of overall cost-cutting and energy-savings measures that are sure to be implemented by the Marine Corps. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing, as well as less vehicle and energy use.

3.2-1: "event-related" visits are assumed to include those participants and spectators of organized OHV races or other similar events that visit exclusively because of a scheduled event (and would not visit if the event were not being held);

Dispersed use visitors are also assumed to include a proportion of race spectators that would come to the project area anyway, even if race events did not occur.

GEN-1

SOC-1

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 1 of 8):

GEN-1:

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

SOC-1:

Please see Appendix K of the Final EIS for information on Socioeconomics modeling assumptions for displaced event-related and dispersed visitor use. All visitor use information is based on the best available data as provided by the BLM.

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 2 of 8)

COMMENT – Please explain why a proportion of race spectators would still come to the area, even if race events did not occur. What proportion are you referring to?

3.2-25: For the purposes of providing an estimated number of visitors for this event alone [KOH], it was assumed that the 15,146 visitors estimated for 2010, visited Johnson Valley for an average of 3 days; therefore, the total visitor-days of use for this event in 2010 was estimated to be 45,438 visitor-days of use.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it's not consistent with the BLM's use data for this one event. The event promoter is required to accurately submit visitor use data, and then pay a fee. Rather than make up a number based on an unvalidated assumption, reference the event promoter's official submission to BLM. If you use something different, then you are also publicly showing that the BLM is not doing an adequate, proper job in their permitting process in monitoring events, visitor use, and collect appropriate fees.

3.2-26: The visitor-days of use for the King of the Hammers event was estimated separately (45,438 visitor-days). To estimate the visitor-days of use of activity related to other organized events throughout the year, 50% of remaining event visitors were assumed to recreate in Johnson Valley for 2 days and the other 50% of event visitors was estimated to recreate in Johnson Valley for 3 days (BLM 2009).

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it does not take into consideration the many people who camp out and recreate in Johnson Valley for extended periods of time (greater than just 2 or 3 days.) You should also reference the information that organized event promoters submit to BLM. That is supposed to be accurate and is monitored by BLM to ensure that proper event fees are paid.

3.9-8: The projected baseline level of ordnance activity within the Combat Center range complex at the time the proposed action would be implemented (approximately 2014 or 2015) is assumed to be approximately double (2x) the baseline ordnance use modeled in the 2003 noise study, WR 03-11 (Wyle 2003b). An assumed doubling of the ordnance use since 2002 represents the estimated change that has occurred due to higher wartime training requirements and deployments in recent years, and that is expected to continue.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as the Marine Corps' 2015 budget will be reduced. Combined with the increasing costs of gas, you need to assume less ordnance activity as a part of overall cost-cutting and energy-savings measures that are sure to be implemented by the Marine Corps. Revise this assumption to more accurately correlate to the Marine Corps' expected budget downsizing, as well as less ordnance use.

3.10-60: Areas that might potentially be affected by new airspace are assumed to be limited to those where new low altitude (e.g., to 1,500 feet [457 meters] above ground surface or lower) limits are established. Aircraft operations at higher altitudes are not likely to affect biological resources because noise levels would be lower and operation would be above the flight altitude of migratory birds.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption as it has been clearly documented that many kinds of birds fly at altitudes higher than 1,500 feet. Please see the attachment entitled "Migratory Bird Altitude" put out by the USGS.

SOC-1

NOI-1

AIR-1

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 2 of 8):

NOI-1:

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

AIR-1:

The Final EIS has been modified for clarification.

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 3 of 8)

4.1-3: For the purposes of the land use impact analysis, it is assumed that all applicable federal statutes, regulations, and programs related to property acquisition, acquisition of existing rights-of-way, surface and subsurface mining rights, and other property rights and ownership, would apply. For example, this includes purchase of private property at fair market value and, as appropriate, applicable relocation assistance.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because there are no cost estimates in the EIS of how much these things will cost for each of the alternatives. This information must be openly disclosed to the public, as well as factored into the EIS analysis. The Marine Corps does not have an open checkbook. I was told at the public meetings that it would cost about \$50-100 million. This is an unreasonable assumption, especially in light of the efforts to reduce the Dept of Defense's budget.

4.2-1: Specifically, a Year 2015 baseline estimate of 337,000 average annual visitor-days was assumed in this analysis, based on 2010 visitor data estimated by BLM and the agency's projections for growth in visitors to the area over the next few years.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because you have not factored in the rising cost of gas. Recreation growth is going to decline if it gets too expensive for people to travel long distances to the desert and then feed there gas-guzzlers once there.

4.2-1: For purposes of this analysis, a level of 800 visitor-days per year was assumed for the south study area and 500 visitor-days per year was assumed for the east area.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if Johnson Valley and the south areas are closed then you can expect more people to recreate in the east area instead.

4.2-6: Notes: 1 Assumes that 90% of dispersed use visitor-days under each alternative from Table 4.2-3, would be displaced to other recreation and OHV areas within San Bernardino County. Assumes that none of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas.

COMMENT – I find it hard to believe that NONE of the events could be accommodated at other regional OHV areas. There are a number of motorcycle races, for example, that could use Reddard Valley instead. This is not a valid assumption.

4.2-11: As mentioned above, it is reasonable to assume that roughly 60% of existing racing events, including car and truck races that currently occur within the Johnson Valley OHV Area, would be displaced or eliminated.

COMMENT – This is not clear. How much of the 60% would be displaced vs. eliminated? The statement is also inconsistent with the footnote on page 4.2-6 that says you assumed that "none of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas" for that alternative.

4.2-20: As mentioned above, it is reasonable to assume that roughly half of the existing racing events, including car and truck races that currently occur within the Johnson Valley OHV Area, would be displaced or eliminated.

GEN-2

REC-1

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 3 of 8):

GEN-2:

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

REC-1:

All visitor use information is based on the best available data as provided by the BLM. Please see Appendix K for more information on displaced visitor assumptions. Appendix K explains that some race events may be able to proceed in a reduced or truncated form, or be held elsewhere as a weekday event, but for the sake of a conservative analysis, it is assumed that no current Johnson Valley race events would be held anywhere in the county.

Estimates for visitor days in the East and South study areas are baseline estimates meaning they represent data prior to the implementation of the proposed action.

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 4 of 8)

COMMENT – This is not clear. How much of the 60% would be displaced vs. eliminated? The statement is also inconsistent with the footnote on page 4.2-6 that says you assumed that “more of the event-related visitor-days would be accommodated at regional OHV areas” for that alternative.

REC-1

4.3-2: for Johnson Valley only, the spending pattern differences based on visitor origin (e.g., “local” visitors are assumed to spend all of the daily amount within the local area, while visitors from outside the county are expected to spend some proportion in their home county before they leave, some on the way, and the rest in the local area during their visit);

COMMENT – This is not clear. Clarify how much is spent at home, on the way, & in the local area.

4.3-5: Specifically, a Year 2015 baseline estimate of 337,000 average annual visitor-days was assumed in this analysis, based on 2010 visitor data estimated by BLM and the agency’s projections for growth in visitors to the area over the next few years.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because you have not factored in the rising cost of gas. Recreation growth is going to decline if it gets too expensive for people to travel long distances to the desert and then find there gas-guzzlers once there.

Recreational visits to Johnson Valley include a mix of single-day and multi-day trips (the analysis assumed a mix of 20% single-day and 80% multi-day).

For purposes of this analysis, a level of 800 visitor-days per year was assumed for the south study area and 500 visitor-days per year was assumed for the east area: all visits were assumed to be single day instead of multi-day visits and all by local area residents only. See Appendix K for a complete description of modeling assumptions and results.

SOC-2

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if Johnson Valley and the south areas are closed then you can expect more people to recreate in the east area instead.

The assumed baseline level of film industry spending in the project area is approximately \$1.6 million per year, based on the total level of such spending in the Johnson Valley area between 2001 and 2008 (Inland Empire Film Commission 2010a). All benefits of this film industry spending was assumed to accrue to the “local” area within 50 miles (80 km) of Johnson Valley. Half of film industry expenditures were assumed to be taxable at a 10% rate (average transient occupancy tax rate for the area).

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because rising gas costs will keep the film industry closer to home. I would expect the majority of films requiring desert scenes to be shot in the Mojave as close to Hollywood as possible. I expect greater movie filming use in the Palmdale and Lancaster areas.

As shown in Table 4.3-1, the total estimated direct county-wide expenditures (2015 baseline conditions) related to recreational use of all three acquisition study areas and film industry use of Johnson Valley (including sales tax) is approximately \$8.7 million per year (expressed in 2015 dollars). Approximately \$6 million of this amount is assumed to be spent in the area within 50 miles (80 km) of Johnson Valley. Almost \$7.5 million in additional trip spending is assumed to occur outside the county as visitors travel to Johnson Valley from other counties and states.

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 4 of 8):

SOC-2:

Please see Appendix K for more information on visitor spending patterns.

All visitor use information is based on the best available data as provided by the BLM.

Estimates for visitor days in the East study area are baseline estimates meaning they represent data prior to the implementation of the proposed action.

Please see Appendix K for information on assumptions related to film industry spending.

Under Alternative 1, less than 100% of the entire area would be for exclusive military use. The EIS states on page 4.3-6 that some dispersed use is assumed to continue because a few popular areas within the Johnson Valley OHV would remain open to the public.

Assumptions on where military personnel would live are based on current percentages. Clarifying text has been added to the Final EIS.

Table 4.2-5 shows that 90% of displaced OHV use would be expected to continue to use OHV areas within San Bernardino County.

Please see Appendix M of the Final EIS for more information on displaced OHV use and some environmental impacts that might be expected.

4.3-6: Alternative 1. In addition, the analysis assumed that 100% of organized race events would be displaced (along with all visitor-days of use associated with such events) and 75% of the visitor-days categorized as dispersed use would not occur.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because if the entire area is exclusive military use then dispersed use should also decrease by 100% there. Also, if 100% of the organized events are “displaced,” then you need to state where they will be displaced to and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be “eliminated,” then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.

4.3-7: New military personnel were assumed to be distributed 25% living on the installation and 75% living in surrounding communities. It was also assumed that 70% of all new positions would be filled by people migrating from outside the county.

COMMENT – Is this assumption similar to the current distribution of military personnel on base vs. off base? Provide the current distribution and your rationale for assuming something different. Are 70% of new positions currently filled with people moving in from outside the County? Describe the current percentage and your rationale for assuming something different.

4.3-8: Based on their locations relative to the two main routes used to travel to Johnson Valley, it could be assumed that Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley together benefit from the majority of the “local” spending from Johnson Valley visits.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because I’m sure that many wheelers come to the area along I-10 and I-40, through Barstow and Palm Springs. There will also be impacts to those communities.

4.3-9: As indicated in the analysis described above and in Appendix K, it is conservatively assumed that at least 25% of the total dispersed use OHV activity (which represents 83% of total visitor-days) would continue to occur after implementation of Alternative 1.

COMMENT – How could 25% of the dispersed use continue to occur if the area becomes exclusive for military use?

4.3-14: The socioeconomic analysis assumed that 60% of organized race events would be displaced (along with all visitor-days associated with such use) and 25% of the dispersed use would no longer occur. Based on input from the BLM, the analysis also assumed that 90% of the total annual visitor-days displaced by Alternative 2 in the “local” area (within 50 miles [80 km] of Johnson Valley) would be transferred to the other designated OHV areas and recreational opportunities in the county. Other assumptions used in the analysis are described in Appendix K.

COMMENT – If 60% of the organized events are “displaced,” then you need to state where they will be displaced to and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be “eliminated,” then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.

SOC-2

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 6 of 8)

4.3-21: For purposes of this analysis, it was assumed that the average annual visitor-days of use would be reduced by 15% for both organized events and multi-day dispersed use. Single-day dispersed use visits were assumed to decline by 30%.

COMMENT - How much will be displaced? How much will be totally eliminated? If 30% of the organized events are "displaced," then you need to state where they will be displaced to, and analyze the impacts of that. If you actually meant that a percentage would be "eliminated," then state and analyze that. My guess is that some will be displaced and some will be eliminated.

4.6-5: For the purpose of this analysis, a worst-case scenario is assumed, whereby all 8,000 Marines would arrive by bus on the same day (though this would never likely be the case). This would equate to roughly 200 buses (40 passengers per bus) arriving at the Combat Center on the same day. The greatest percent increase in traffic volume would therefore occur on Lear Avenue (an approximate 6% increase in traffic volume [3,461 vehicles per day to 3,661 vehicles per day]). Such an increase would not meet the threshold of significance (12%) as described in Section 4.6.1.2, and therefore, would not substantiate a significant shift in LOS.

COMMENT - This is not a valid assumption because there is no likelihood that all 8000 Marines would arrive by bus on the same day. While that would be a great reason for a parade in the high desert, please use an assumption for analysis that has more credibility. The EIS itself admits that "this would never likely be the case." Thus, it shouldn't even be presented as a worst-case scenario.

4.7-2: The number of sortie-operations was assumed to be equally accounted for in multiple SUA areas since the proposed SUA would allow all sortie operations to be more widely dispersed throughout the entire airspace complex.

COMMENT - This is not a valid assumption because MEB exercises don't call for equal dispersment of sorties. If the batralions are moving east to west, then there would be a different dispersment of aircraft in comparison to when they move west to east. Analyze the differences accurately by alternative rather than assume equal dispersment through entire airspace complex.

4.7-7: Many of the ongoing Combat Center operations are staged out of the Expeditionary Airfield (EAF), as described in Section 3.7.3.1, and it is assumed MEB Exercise aircraft would also operate from this airfield.

COMMENT - This isn't valid assumption because that airfield isn't equipped to handle F-35s, etc.

4.8-5: All emissions are assumed to occur in calendar year 2013.

COMMENT - This is not a valid assumption because emissions will occur over multiple years. The MEB exercises aren't even scheduled to begin until 2015.

4.9-2: For each of the action alternatives, it was generally assumed that each airspace sortie would generate an arrival and departure at the EAF and no run-ups. The exception would include F-35B aircraft because the EAF matting surface is currently not designed to withstand the temperatures caused by an F-35B performing a rolling vertical landing or a purely vertical landing. No F-35 flight or run-up operations

SOC-2

TRANS-1

AIR-2

AQ-1

NOI-2

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 6 of 8):

**TRANS-1:**

The assumption that all 8,000 Marines would arrive on the same day is made in order to provide a worst case scenario, which is required under NEPA.

**AIR-2:**

Please see Appendix D for information on estimated percentage of sortie time that various aircraft types would normally operate within each airspace area while performing MEB Exercise mission activities.

Comment noted.

**AQ-1:**

The statement referred to in your comment is presented as a note to Table 4.8-2, which refers to the construction phase that would take place prior to any MEB operations.

**NOI-2:**

Comment noted.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 7 of 8)

were modeled at the EAF for any alternative. This is consistent with the F-35B West Coast Basing EIS (DoN 2010).

COMMENT – The Draft EIS indicates a variety of other aircraft also. Historical data most likely shows much aircraft used in training missions there as coming from Yuma or other places. It doesn't seem valid to assume all but the F-35 would generate an arrival and departure at the EAF.

4.9-4: Ordnance operations were assumed to be distributed uniformly across all firing/target locations.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because MEB exercises don't call for equal dispersment of ordnance. If the battalions are moving east to west, then there would be a different dispersment of ordnance in comparison to when they move west to east. Analyze the differences accurately by alternative rather than assume uniform dispersment across all firing/target locations. The company objectives and final MEB objective should also receive more ordnance, wouldn't they?

4.9-23: One of the 52 POIs would have CNEL greater than or equal to 62 dBC. The residentially-zoned west study area site would have a CNEL of 64 dBC. However, it is assumed that the west study area site would not have occupied housing.

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because there is occupied housing within close proximity in Johnson Valley.

4.10-1: The quantitative estimates of disturbance are totals over the project lifetime, which is assumed to be approximately 50 years; however, direct impacts would be greatest when military training under the proposed action begins.

COMMENT – Why wouldn't the project lifetime correlate with the term of the military (and withdrawal) that is being proposed? Isn't that only 70 or 75 years and would be subject to approval by Congress?

4.10-3: The same basemap was used with GIS analysis to estimate the number of tortoises located within the disturbance footprint, and a presumed amount of take was derived (assumed to be 50% in high-intensity disturbance areas and 10% in medium-intensity disturbance areas). These impact quantifications were limited to anticipated areas of high- and medium-intensity disturbance.

Modeling also assumes that densities would remain constant over the lifetime of the project, does not account for movement of tortoises into or out of disturbed areas, and does not account for recovery of disturbed areas (which would not be expected due to ongoing disturbance and long recovery times). The wide range reported for potential take of desert tortoises is related to the uncertainty in estimating desert tortoise density (Karl 2010). Refer to Appendix I for detailed assumptions and methodology used in assessment of impacts to tortoise habitat and take of tortoises.

COMMENT – How can you assume a 50% take with all the conservation measures and mitigation that being proposed for tortoises? That seems awfully high. Don't the Marines try to avoid high-density tortoise areas whenever possible?

NOI-2

BIO-1

Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 7 of 8):

BIO-1:

Thank you for your comment.

As noted in the EIS, a wide range is provided due to the uncertainty in estimating desert tortoise density.

**Comment ID: N-18858 (Page 8 of 8)**

4.12-6: This assumes that the two known alternative sources of local iron ore (Baxter Quarry and Silver Lake Mine) would continue to be in production until at least 2020 and 2022, respectively, as per their current SMARA permits (see discussion in Section 3.12.3.2).

COMMENT – This is not a valid assumption because MEB exercises within exclusive mining use areas would not be compatible with producing mines. Please explain how those uses, diagnostic and clashing uses can jointly occur. Better yet, assume both will have to be closed or brought out by 2015 when the training exercises begin and analyze that in terms of costs and impacts to mining.

4.13-1: The impact analysis assumed that no additional water infrastructure would be developed to supply water for the training exercises. Instead, it was assumed that all water required to support the training exercises would be supported by existing groundwater supplies at the Combat Center (i.e., the Surprise-Spring subbasin), and none of the project alternatives would extract groundwater from the proposed west, south, or east study areas. The analysis also assumed that two or three communication towers (depending on the alternative) would be constructed, with no other permanent structures constructed.

COMMENT – How long can the existing water supplies last? The visual impacts of communications towers have not been adequately analyzed in the EIS.

Please keep me informed of all progress on this project.

GEO-1

GEN-3

Sincerely,

  
Tammy Blackwell

**Response to Comment N-18858 (Page 8 of 8):**

**GEO-1:**

Please see Section 2.6 of the EIS. Section 2.6 explains that mining claim owners would be offered fair market value for their claims or be offered reasonable access to their claims. These decisions as to which would be offered would be made on a case-by-case basis.

**GEN-3:**

Thank you for your comments. Please see Section 4.13 of the EIS for information on Water Resources and Section 4.5 of the EIS for information on Visual Resources.

Comment ID: N-18859 (Page 1 of 2)

Response to Comment N-18859 (Page 1 of 2):

NPWRC:: Migration of Bi

Page 1 of 2



Comment ID: N-18859  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Northern Prairie Wildlife Research Center

## Migration of Birds

### *Migratory Flight Altitude*

While factors regulating the heights at which birds migrate are not clear, there are many obvious reasons why flying at higher altitudes may be advantageous. High-altitude flight may be used to locate familiar landmarks, fly over fog or clouds, surmount physical barriers, gain advantage of a following wind, or maintain a better thermoregulatory balance.

In general, estimates of bird heights based on direct observation are quite unreliable except under special conditions. A Eurasian Sparrowhawk could be distinguished at 800 feet but disappeared from site at 2,800 feet. A Rook (a European member of the crow family) could be recognized at 1,000 feet but disappeared from sight at 3,300 feet. An interesting experiment with an inflated model of a vulture painted black with a wing span of 7 feet 10 inches illustrated similar limitations. When released from an airplane at 4,700 feet, it was barely visible and invisible without binoculars at 5,800 feet. At 7,000 feet it was not picked up even when 12 power binoculars were used. Radar studies have demonstrated more accurately than human vision that 95 percent of the migratory movements occur at less than 10,000 feet, the bulk of the movements occurring under 3,000 feet.

Yet birds do fly at higher altitudes. Bird flight at 20,000 feet, where less than half the oxygen is present than at sea level, is impressive if only because the work is achieved by living muscle tissue. A Himalayan mountain climber at 16,000 feet was rather amazed when a flock of geese flew northward about two miles over his head honking as they went. At 20,000 feet a man has a hard time talking while running, but those geese were probably flying at 27,000 feet and even calling while they traveled at this tremendous height. Numerous other observations have come from the Himalayas. Observers at 14,000 feet recorded storks and cranes flying so high that they could be seen only through field glasses. In the same area large vultures were seen soaring at 25,000 feet and an eagle carcass was found at 26,000 feet. The expedition to Mt. Everest in 1952 found skeletons of a Northern Pintail and a Black-tailed Godwit at 16,400 feet on Khumbu Glacier. Bar-headed Geese have been observed flying over the highest peaks (29,000+ feet) even though a 10,000-foot pass was nearby. Probably at least 30 species regularly cross these high passes. Other accurate records on altitude of migratory flights are scanty, although altimeter observations from airplanes and radar are becoming more frequent in the literature. For example, a Mallard was struck by a commercial airliner at 21,000 feet over the Nevada desert. Radar observations have revealed that birds on long-distance flights fly at higher altitudes than short-distance migrants. It has been hypothesized that advantageous tail winds of greater velocity are found higher up and that the cooler air minimizes the demand for evaporative water loss to regulate body temperature under the exertion of flight. Radar studies also have shown that nocturnal migrants fly at different altitudes at different times during the night. Birds generally take off shortly after sundown and rapidly gain maximum altitude. This peak is maintained until around midnight, then the travelers gradually descend until daylight. Thus, there is considerable variation, but for most small

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/migratio/altitude.htm>

4/20/2011

Thank you for your comment.

**Comment ID: N-18859 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment N-18859 (Page 2 of 2):**

NPWRC -- MIGRATION OF BIRDS

Page 2 of 2

birds the favored altitude appears to be between 500 and 1,000 feet. Some nocturnal migrants (probably shorebirds) fly over the ocean at 15,000 or even 20,000 feet. Nocturnal migrants also fly slightly higher than diurnal migrants. Observations made from lighthouses and other vantage points indicate that certain migrants commonly travel at altitudes of very few feet to a few hundred feet above sea or land. Sandpipers, Red-necked Phalaropes, and various sea ducks have been seen flying so low they were visible only as they topped a wave. Observers stationed at lighthouses and lightships off the English coast have similarly recorded the passage of landbirds flying just above the surface of the water and rarely rising above 200 feet over the waves.

Previous Section -- Flight Speed and Rate of Migration  
Return to Contents  
Next Section -- Segregation During Migration

U.S. Department of the Interior | U.S. Geological Survey  
URL: <http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/migratio/altitude.htm>  
Page Contact Information: [npwrc@usgs.gov](mailto:npwrc@usgs.gov)  
Page Last Modified: August 3, 2006

<http://www.npwrc.usgs.gov/resource/birds/migratio/altitude.htm>

4/20/2011

Comment ID: N-18860

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS**  
 FLOOD CONTROL • LAND DEVELOPMENT & CONSTRUCTION • OPERATIONS  
 SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT • SURVEYOR • TRANSPORTATION



COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO

5-0835 • (909) 387-8104  
 Fax (909) 387-8130

GRANVILLE M. "BOW" BOWMAN, P.E., P.L.S.  
 Director of Public Works

Comment ID: N-18860  
 Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 19, 2011

File: 10(ENV)-1.01

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
 Attn: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
 1220 Pacific Highway  
 San Diego, CA. 92132-519

**RE: NEPA - NOTICE OF A DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DEIS) FOR THE 29 PALMS TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION AND AIRSPACE ESTABLISHMENT PROJECT**

Thank you for giving the San Bernardino County Department of Public Works (Department) the opportunity to comment on the above-referenced project. The environmental document was circulated to other Divisions within our Department and the following are their comments:

**Traffic Division (Ed Petre, P.E., (909) 387-8186):**

1. Please have the Marine Corps submit a traffic study to us for review and comment, showing the impacts on the County Maintained Road System by the proposed base expansion.
2. Question: who would maintain any of the current County maintained roadways which fall within the proposed base expansion?
3. FYI-one of the proposals would close North Amboy Road for a period of two (2) days per year.

TRN-1

**Environmental Management Division (Milo Rivera, Ecologist Resource Specialist, (909) 387-7971):**

Expansion of 29 Palms base would lead to further degradation and fragmentation of habitat for Desert Tortoise and with a good population already present on base, this has potential to lead tortoises to being extirpated from base lands. As Fort Irwin expansion has shown, efforts to relocate Desert Tortoise have been unsuccessful.

BIO-1

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact the specific individuals that have provided that specific comment, as listed above.

Sincerely,

**ANNESLEY IGNATIUS, P.E.**  
 Deputy Director – Land Development & Construction

ARI:PE:mb/CEQA Comments to DEIS\_Navy\_Training Land Acquisition.doc

cc: Patrick Egle

GREGORY C. DEVEREAUX  
 Chief, Strategic Office

BRAD MITCHELL  
 Planning & Information

JOHN GONZALES  
 Planning & Information

Board of Supervisors  
 First District  
 Second District

MELISSA PERRY  
 County Clerk

1st District

1st District  
 County District

Response to Comment N-18860:

**TRN-1:**

Impacts to transportation and circulation under each of the action alternatives is contained in Section 4.6 of the EIS. Under the proposed action, the Marine Corps would not acquire any County-maintained roadway; therefore, maintenance of roadways would be performed as it is currently.

As described in the EIS in Section 4.6, mitigation measure TRAN-1 would be implemented to lessen impacts. TRAN-1 specifies that the Marine Corps would coordinate with the City of Twentynine Palms, the County of San Bernardino, and other local authorities to provide as much advance notice as possible for the two day per year that North Amboy Road would be closed. In addition, notices would be provided to city and county transportation officials and proper signage and warnings would be placed along nearby travel corridors.

**BIO-1:**

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The EIS concludes that there would be a significant impact to desert tortoise under each of the action alternatives. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Comment ID: N-18861 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18861  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



June 1, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (Combat Center) in Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Dear Project Manager:

Golden State Water Company (GSWC) appreciates the opportunity to provide the U.S. Department of the Navy (Navy) in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management and the Federal Aviation Administration with comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) evaluating the proposal to expand the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, California (29 Palms Base). As described in the DEIS, the purpose of the expansion is to fulfill the Marine Corps requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for three Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) sized Marine Air Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) and associated command, aviation, and combat logistics support elements. Existing training facilities, ranges, and live-fire ground and air maneuver areas are inadequate to support the requirement for MEB-sized training exercises. GSWC's comments are being submitted to help ensure compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.), as well as other federal laws. This letter joins in the comments previously submitted on the project by Cadiz, Inc. and Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD).

**i. About GSWC**

GSWC is a California public utility company engaged principally in the purchase, production and distribution of water in 75 communities in 10 counties in the State of California. GSWC is regulated by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC). It was incorporated as a California corporation on December 31, 1929. GSWC is organized into nine water and one electric rate-making areas. The nine water rate-making areas are divided into three regions for rate filing purposes. Region I consists of 7 rate-making and customer service areas in northern and central California. Region II consists of one rate-making area servicing 4 customer service areas located in Los Angeles County. Region III consists of one rate-making area servicing 10 customer service areas in eastern Los Angeles County, and in Orange, San Bernardino and Imperial counties. GSWC also provides electric service to the City of Big Bear Lake and surrounding areas in San Bernardino County through its Bear Valley Electric Service (BVES) division.

**ii. GSWC's Participation in SMWD's Water Project Planned for the Cadiz Property**

GSWC's interest in the proposed 29-Palms Base expansion relates to its participation in SMWD's water project on the Cadiz, Inc. property which is within the eastern expansion area included as part of Alternative 3 in the DEIS. SMWD is the lead agency for the Cadiz Valley Water Conservation, Recovery and Storage Project (Water Project) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) review process. GSWC has an option agreement to participate in this project.

630 E. Foothill Blvd., San Dimas, CA 91773  
Tel: (909) 394-3600 • Fax: (909) 394-1382 • www.gswater.com

WAT-1

Response to Comment N-18861 (Page 1 of 3):

WAT-1 and WAT-2:

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS acknowledges that Alternative 3 would have a” regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project.” The EIS also states that the Cadiz project was uncertain and undergoing environmental review process. The EIS has been revised to update the Cadiz project description for the Final EIS using the information provided by comment letters from Cadiz Inc. and others. These revisions are not likely to alter the significance of cumulative impacts from Alternative 3.

WAT-3:

Section 4.13.4.1 addresses the potential impacts from Alternative 3 to groundwater quality, and concludes “because of the ongoing management and minimization of MC residues at the Combat Center and implementation of management and minimization of MC residues in the east acquisition area, impacts to surface water quality from Alternative 3 MCs would be less than significant.” The low precipitation rate, intermittent receiving surface water bodies, and deep groundwater, limits the migration of MC residues and thus the potential impacts of use of munitions.

Chapter 2 has been revised to include a detailed description of the current range clearance operations. In addition, the Navy would conduct periodic groundwater sampling of the eastern expansion area should Alternative 3 be selected for implementation.

Comment ID: N-18861 (Page 2 of 3)

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
June 1, 2011  
Page 2

The Water Project is a potential new water source from a large, renewable aquifer located in the eastern Mojave Desert east of the existing military base. It is designed to manage the aquifer and conserve water from nearby watersheds otherwise being lost to evaporation in local dry lakes. Conserved water would be collected and delivered to SMWD as well as GSWC, and other participating water agencies. There would also be an option for carry-over water storage in the Cadiz Aquifer. The Project will diversify GSWC's water portfolio and help drought-proof GSWC to ensure its water demands are met regardless of the state's supply.

WAT-1

Alternative 3 being considered in the DEIS for the base expansion would severely negatively affect the Water Project because it includes condemning large portions of the Cadiz property needed for SMWD's project. Therefore, any action including proposed Alternative 3 is of serious concern. To help Navy understand the extent of resources presently committed to the Water Project, please see SMWD's website, available at <http://www.suwd.com/operations/the-cadiz-valley-project.html>.

III. Concerns with Alternative 3 and It's Potential Adverse Significant Impacts

NEPA compels federal agencies to consider the consequences of their proposed activities on the human environment. 42 U.S.C. § 4331. The statute requires federal agencies to produce a DEIS when proposing to engage in any 'major Federal actions' that will significantly affect the human environment. 42 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C). See *Natural Res. Def. Council, Inc. v. Grant* (E.D.N.C. 1972) 341 F.Supp. 356, 365-67. A significance determination requires agencies to consider the context of an action and the intensity of its impacts. See *Environmental Protection Information Center v. Blackwell* (N.D. Cal. 2004) 389 F.Supp.2d 1174.

GSWC has the following concerns relating to the NEPA review and DEIS for the expansion project, particularly including its consideration of the eastern expansion in Alternative 3:

1. Water Supply: Impacts on Southern California's water supply: Selection of Alternative 3 would impact Southern California's water supply because it may prevent implementation of the Water Project. The Water Project which will improve water supply reliability by conserving the average annual sustainable yield of the local watersheds, and is critical for supply reliability for Southern California water providers. It will also reduce dependence on imported water by utilizing a source of water that is not dependent upon the California State Water Project (SWP), the Colorado River, or the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta (Bay-Delta). Therefore, and because of the nature of the base expansion including live-fire maneuver training for three battalion task forces, we disagree with the DEIS's findings that the Project may co-exist with expansion under Alternative 3, and request that further analysis be commenced under the FEIS to evaluate the impacts it may cause. See DEIS, 2-95-96.

WAT-2

2. Water Quality: Impacts on groundwater water quality: Alternative 3 would negatively impact the local groundwater quality because it creates potential for groundwater contamination from ammunition, bombs, fuel, hazardous chemicals that are used in military exercises on land that overlies the Cadiz Valley aquifer system within the proposed expansion area. These impacts were not adequately assessed in the DEIS and should be considered.

WAT-3

3. Impacts to Cadiz Operations and the Local Community: SMWD shares the concerns expressed by Cadiz that Alternative 3 may have on Cadiz, its operations, and the local community; impacts on energy production; impacts on agriculture; local socioeconomic impacts; economic impacts of land acquisition on the federal budget; transportation impacts; and impacts to biological resources. Please contact GSWC if you would like further explanation regarding these additional concerns.

GEN-1

IV. Conclusion

GSWC appreciates the opportunity to comment on the proposed 29 Palms Base and Environmental Impact Statement, and requests that the FEIS evaluate the concerns described above.

GEN-2

Response to Comment N-18861 (Page 2 of 3):

GEN-1:

Impacts to various resource areas from implementation of Alternative 3 are discussed in Chapter 4 and 5, including the specific impacts mentioned.

GEN-2:

Thank you for your comment. The contact information provided has been added to the project mailing list.

Comment ID: N-18861 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18861 (Page 3 of 3):

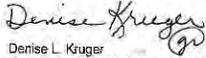
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
June 1, 2011  
Page 3

Specifically, GSWC respectfully requests consideration of the following: 1) elimination of Alternative 3 from consideration and/or additional reasonable alternatives, 2) conducting further study and evaluation of impacts, 3) further discussion of appropriate mitigation measures, and take whatever further actions necessary to develop an DEIS in compliance with NEPA which can serve as the basis for informed decision-making and public scrutiny.

We request to be notified of any and all future actions regarding this DEIS, preparation of additional studies, as well as preparation of the FEIS. Please add Dr. Toby B. Moore, GSWC Water Resources Manager, to your list of persons receiving notice of this project. You may contact him at [TobyMoore@gswater.com](mailto:TobyMoore@gswater.com).

GEN-2

Sincerely,



Denise L. Kruger  
Senior Vice President, Regulated Utilities  
Golden State Water Company

**Comment ID: N-18862 (Page 1 of 9)**

Comment ID: N-18862  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

12961 Newport Street  
Hesperia, CA 92344

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132

Dear sir:

The whole basis for your EIS is predicated upon old outdated information. Your training mission is no longer relevant. Your purpose and need must be re-examined based on new information. I enter the following into the record:

- 1). The President is now calling for \$400 billion in reductions. This is a welcome shift in thinking. Weapons and programs have gone over budget. Even when weapons underperformed or were designed for a cold war that no longer exists, the DoD continued to soak the taxpayers. The 29 Palms expansion EIS does not identify the project cost, but I think scrapping this ill-conceived plan will save at least \$1 billion.
- 2). Defense spending has doubled to \$553 billion since 9-11-2011. That doesn't include costs of the wars our nation is currently fighting on three fronts. Those will add about another \$200 billion this year. You can save \$1 billion by cancelling the 29 Palms expansion.
- 3). Earlier this year Sec Robert Gates proposed finding \$178 billion in Defense savings over the next 5 years. He eliminated several costly programs and weapons. He put more pressure on contractors. He has directed all the services to find ways to cut costs. The Marine Corp should start by better using the 600,000 acres they already have for training at 29 Palms, CA.
- 4). Read the attached article "It's Just Too Easy To Launch An Attack" by Charles Pena. He says "military intervention has become too easy." The Cold War is long since over. There is a sprawling global military footprint. There is also a sprawling national military footprint, and Southern California is a case in point. I support using the military for humanitarian missions or defending our nation. We don't need to train for large-scale force-on-force nuclear war that will leave the Earth in ruins.
- 5). Our military shouldn't be used to solve the world's problems. Train them as a "blunt instrument intended to destroy

**Response to Comment N-18862 (Page 1 of 9):**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a current Marine Corps training requirement. In addition to the high deployment tempo in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Marine Corps must maintain high proficiency for other vital Marine Corps missions, including combined arms maneuver at the MEB level. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Comment ID: N-18862 (Page 2 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18862 (Page 2 of 9):

or kill" and it will become too easy to use them in situations where they shouldn't even be. Sec of State Madeleine Albright once argued to Gen Collin Powell, "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about, if we can't use it?" That is the WRONG approach. The Marines should train their MEBS for what we see on the horizon. We don't need to contain the Soviet Union as we did during the Cold War. What successor rival powers are driving the base expansion at 29 Palms? Do you think we'll be taking on China, North Korea, or Iran anytime soon? That would be a BIG mistake.

And even if we do militarily engage Iran, we aren't going to invade. If we go to war with them, the U.S. military role would be air strikes, drones and special operations missions, NOT a large-scale invasion by American Soldiers and Marines.

6). Training Marines for "Large-Scale Air Ground Task Forces" will simply make it too easy and tempting to then use them for that purpose. That is simply wrong! If anything, we should be training for humanitarian missions, curb presence overseas, rationalize our missions, support our friendly regional powers.

Please read the attached article from April 25, 2011 issue of Time Magazine - "How To Save A Trillion Dollars" by Mark Thompson. He says Washington must "recalibrate its rusty risk meter." The EIS needs to provide information on risks we face. Recalibrate your obsolete thinking. Once you do, no expansion will be needed at 29 Palms. Your 2003-4 studies are out of date.

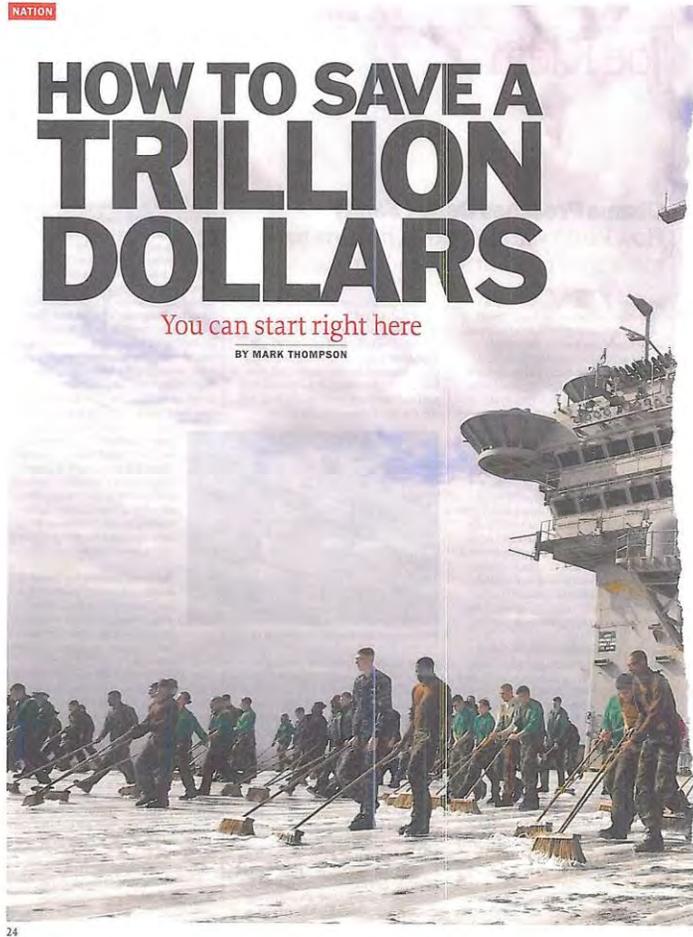
Forget your "Damn the Torpedoes" approach to base expansion. Instead, adopt a "Tighten the Belt" approach. The U.S. spends nearly as much as the rest of the world combined on defense. According to the Time article, the U.S. spent \$379 billion on defense in 2001. Now we spend \$687 billion. Yes, Congress is a big part of the problem.

If nothing more, read the last two columns in the Time article entitled "WHAT'S THE MISSION?" That is where your EIS is very deficient. You haven't defined the mission. Sure, we might need broad capabilities with maximum flexibility across the widest spectrum of conflict. BUT, as a U.S. taxpayer, I demand that we get Defense spending under control. Start by scrapping the base expansion at 29 Palms. The government should spend only what's needed to DEFEND the COUNTRY - NOT A PENNY MORE.

Yours Truly,  
Michael J. Stafford

Comment ID: N-18862 (Page 3 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18862 (Page 3 of 9):







**A Military Built for The 21st Century**

*The U.S. continues to field and maintain a global force designed during an era of sky's-the-limit defense budgets*

**Use more unmanned aircraft**

*The nation is spending nearly \$400 billion on manned F-35 fighters. Greater use of cheaper, unmanned drones and cutting other programs could reduce the bottom line*

**TOTAL PROCUREMENT SAVINGS  
\$500 BILLION**

**O**N A DAMP, GRAY MORNING IN late February, Navy admirals, U.S. Congress members and top officials of the nation's biggest shipyard gathered in Norfolk, Va., to watch a computerized torch carve bevels into a slab of steel as thick as your fist.

The occasion: the ceremonial cutting of the first piece of a \$15 billion aircraft carrier slated to weigh anchor in 2020. That ship—still unnamed—will follow the just-as-costly *Gerald R. Ford*, now 20% built and due to set sail in 2015.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the world, China is putting the final touches on a new class of DF-21 missiles expressly designed to sink the *Ford* and its sister ship as well as their 5,000-person crews. China's missiles, which will likely cost about \$10 million each, could keep the Navy's carriers so far away from Taiwan that the short-range aircraft they bear would be useless in any conflict over the tiny island's fate.

Aircraft carriers, born in the years before World War II, are increasingly obsolete platforms of war. They feature expensive manned aircraft in an age when budgets are being squeezed and less expensive drones are taking over. While the U.S. and its allies flew hundreds of attack missions against targets in coastal Libya last month, cruise missiles delivered much of the punch, and U.S. carriers were notable only for their absence. Yet the Navy,

backed by the Pentagon and Congress, continues to churn them out as if it were still 1942.

"It's just tradition, the industrial base and some other old and musty arguments" that keep the shipyards building them, says Thomas Barnett, a former Pentagon deep thinker and now chief strategist at Wikistrat, a geopolitical-analysis firm. "We should scale back our carrier design to something much cheaper and simpler. Think of mother ships launching waves of cheap drones—that would actually be more frightening and intimidating." Even Defense Secretary Robert Gates warned last year of "the growing antiship capabilities of adversaries" before asking what in Navy circles had long been the unaskable question. "Do we really need 11 carrier strike groups for another 30 years when no other country has more than one?"

Across Washington, all sorts of people are starting to ask the unthinkable questions about long-sacred military budgets. Can the U.S. really afford more than 500 bases at home and around the world? Do the Air Force, Navy and Marines really need \$400 billion in new jet fighters when their fleets of F-15s, F-16s and F-18s will give them vast air superiority for years to come? Does the Navy need 50 attack submarines when America's main enemy hides in caves? Does the Army still need 80,000 troops in Europe 66 years after the defeat of Adolf Hitler?

It may seem strange to talk about de-

fense cuts while the U.S. is waging one war in Afghanistan, is mopping up a second in Iraq and has just launched a half war in Libya. But those conflicts have made it easy to forget the warning of Admiral Mike Mullen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, that "the single biggest threat to our national security is our debt." Which points to an almost tragic irony of Washington's \$700 billion annual appetite for military stores: we are borrowing cash from China to pay for weapons that we would presumably use against it. If the Chinese want to slay us, they don't need to attack us with their missiles. They just have to call in their loans.

**Diminishing Returns**

**NUMBERS ALONE TELL MUCH OF THE STORY:** We are now spending 50% more (even excluding the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq) than we did on 9/11. We are spending more on the military than we did during the Cold War, when U.S. and NATO troops stared across Germany's Fulda Gap at a real superpower foe with real tanks and thousands of nuclear weapons aimed at U.S. cities. In fact, the U.S. spends about as much on its military as the rest of the world combined.

And yet we feel less secure. We've waged war nonstop for nearly a decade in Afghanistan—at a cost of nearly a half-trillion dollars—against a foe with no army, no navy and no air force. Back home, we are more hunkered down and buttoned up than ever as political figures (and eager

Comment ID: N-18862 (Page 6 of 9)

Response to Comment N-18862 (Page 6 of 9):



**Shrink missile defense**  
*The threat doesn't warrant a national system like the one we're now paying to research, develop and deploy*  
**SAVINGS**  
**\$60 BILLION**

**Reduce global presence**  
*Cut U.S. troop strength, including forces stationed in Asia and Europe, and warn those nations off Pentagon protection*  
**SAVINGS**  
**\$287 BILLION**

**Trim spy spending**  
*The nation's 17 intelligence agencies generate too much information to keep track of what's important*  
**SAVINGS**  
**\$112 BILLION**  
Source: Cato Institute

defense contractors) have sounded a theme of constant vigilance against terrorists who have successfully struck only once. Partly as a consequence, we are an increasingly muscle-bound nation: we send \$1 billion destroyers, with crews of 300 each, to handle five Somali pirates in a fiberglass skiff.

While the U.S.'s military spending has jumped from \$1,500 per capita in 1998 to \$2,700 in 2008, its NATO allies have been spending \$500 per person over the same span. As long as the U.S. is overspending on its defense, it lets its allies skimp on theirs and instead pour the savings into infrastructure, education and health care. So even as U.S. taxpayers fret about their health care costs, their tax dollars are paying for a military that is subsidizing the health care of their European allies.

In January, Gates proposed cutting \$78 billion from Pentagon accounts over five years. President Obama trumpeted that April 13, calling for \$400 billion in cuts by 2023. He offered no specifics beyond saying he and Gates would lead a "fundamental review of America's missions, capabilities and our role in a changing world." Even some Republicans have begun to acknowledge that the Pentagon needs to do its part in the war on debt. "I served in two administrations that practiced and validated the policy of peace through strength," said Indiana Governor Mitch Daniels in February. "But if our nation goes over a financial Niagara, we won't have much strength, and eventually, we won't have peace."

Congress can't make the numbers work by focusing on waste, fraud and abuse, though lawmakers rarely admit this. Both hawks and doves love declaring their determination to root out inefficiencies, but doing so won't solve the problem. Bigger changes are required, and they are long overdue. Among a half-dozen serious studies about how best to reduce defense spending by up to \$1 trillion over the next decade, an emerging consensus is easy to spot: Weapons purchases must be trimmed, and personnel costs must be reduced. And both of those require a new kind of political will to stop treating military spending as pork, a regional and local entitlement that can go on forever. Finally, revising America's defense budget will happen only if the U.S. takes a hard-eyed look at the dozens of military missions that are no longer vital or affordable.

**Damn the Torpedoes**  
 GATES, A COLD WARRIOR GOING BACK TO the 1960s, recently pressed the military services to tighten their belts. The Air Force pledged to cut its fuel bill by \$500 million

**Public spending on defense jumped from \$1,500 per person in 1998 to \$2,700 in 2008**

over the next five years, while the Army said better e-mail systems would save it the same amount. This gives you some idea about the limits of civilian control of the military. On March 14, Gates issued a memo detailing "efficiencies" he is ordering, including a paltry \$12,000 in savings by closing down an outreach program and \$5,000 in combat galleys. "It's important not to repeat the mistakes of the past by making drastic and ill-conceived cuts to the overall defense budget," he says.

But \$1 trillion in cuts wouldn't really be as drastic as it sounds—or as the military's no-surrender defenders insist. Such a trim would still leave the Pentagon fatter than it was before 9/11. Besides, there are vast depots of weapons that are ready for the surplus pile. The number of aircraft carriers could be cut from 11 to eight, and perhaps all could be scuttled in favor of Barnett's cruise carriers. The annual purchase of two \$3 billion attack submarines to maintain a \$8-sub fleet as far as the periscope can see also could be scaled back. The \$383 billion F-35 program really isn't required when U.S. warplanes remain the world's best and can be retrofitted with new engines and electronics to keep them that way. Reagan-era missile defenses and the nuclear arsenal are largely Cold War relics with little relevance today. Altogether, Congress could save close to \$500 billion by smartly scaling back procurement over the next decade.

So much for hardware. On the software—or human—side of the ledger,

TIME April 25, 2011

**NATION DEFENSE SPENDING**

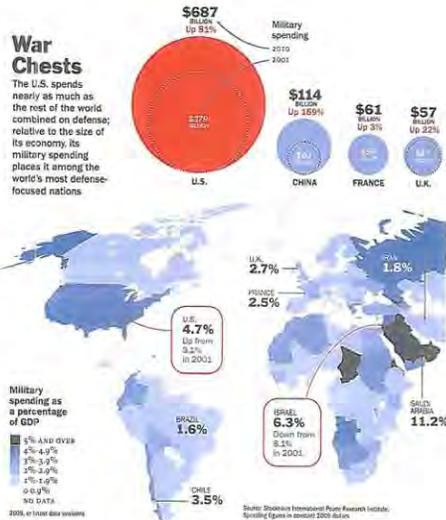
Pentagon pay and benefits have long needed revamping. Here's a number that would make Wall Street weep: some 60 members of the crew of the carrier: U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln* recently pocketed \$3.4 million in bonuses—\$57,000 each, tax-free—simply to re-enlist. Military pay must be better aimed at troops the military wants to retain. The 20-year-and-out retirement system needs to be replaced with a model designed to keep hard-learned institutional knowledge around for twice as long. Health care premiums, frozen at \$460 a family since 1995, must be raised to keep pace with the rest of the nation's. (Pentagon medical costs have soared from \$19 billion in 2001 to more than \$50 billion today.) Gates recognizes just how top-heavy the Pentagon is. He has proposed cutting 102 of its 952 generals and admirals. Trimming the ranks and replacing archaic pay schemes with smarter personnel policies could save \$400 billion over the coming decade, says the bipartisan Sustainable Defense Task Force, a group created by Congress.

Better cloaked but just as ripe for reduction are dozens of specialized military agencies and outposts, most of which date from the Cold War and are no longer as key to our defense as they once were. The U.S. now has 17 intelligence agencies—from the well-known CIA to the well-hidden National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency—generating so much “intelligence” that much of it can’t even be reviewed. Each service has its own intelligence shop, plus a Defense Intelligence Agency to handle anything that might fall through the cracks. Scaling back collection and analysis to what’s vital—as opposed to what is possible—could cut military intelligence budgets by more than \$200 billion in the next 10 years, according to an estimate from the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank.

Such cuts would still leave the U.S. military as the world’s most potent. It would remain the lone force with global reach, given its logistical, communications and intelligence dominance. It would still be the only power able to send warships, warplanes and missiles virtually anywhere in the world at any time. A recent *New York Times*/CBS poll found that if they had to choose, citizens were far more willing to cut defense (55%) than Medicare (21%) or Social Security (13%). Yet Congress continues to resist even minor reductions. California Representative Howard McKean, the Republican chairman of the Armed Services

**War Chests**

The U.S. spends nearly as much as the rest of the world combined on defense, relative to the size of its economy. Its military spending places it among the world’s most defense-focused nations.



Committee, says, “A defense budget in decline portends an America in decline.” Attitudes like that can bankrupt a nation, and the public senses it.

**No Politics, Please. We’re Broke**  
OF COURSE, THE PENTAGON BY ITSELF doesn’t decide where to spend all the money. That’s up to Congress—which is a big part of the problem. Nothing else seems to lead lawmakers to open the federal purse like the prospect of, for example, an aircraft carrier’s steaming home to their district. Between the ship and the dozens of aircraft stored below decks, a Navy carrier is a \$15 billion purchase. And that’s before adding the accompanying destroyers and submarines. With numbers like that, who needs pork? It’s little surprise that the folks most involved in the purchase of these ships—the members of the sea-power subcommittees—hail from Navy-friendly coastal states with a strong interest in keeping as many of them sailing as possible.

Except when states fight over the carriers’ anchorage. Right now, for example, there’s a nasty tug-of-war under way between Virginia and Florida over the Navy’s plan to shift one of Norfolk’s five carriers to Mayport, Fla. The Pentagon says the move is vital so that a natural disaster or attack—of some unspecified kind—does not deliver a knockout blow to the Atlantic Fleet.

Florida lawmakers insist that putting all the East Coast carriers in one basket, Norfolk, is dumb. “The decision has been made,” says Democratic Senator Bill Nelson. “And it’s been made for the purposes of securing the national defense.”

Virginia’s delegation contends that a tightening defense budget can’t cover the \$500 million cost of building the new facilities needed to base a carrier in Florida. “Instead of spending more ... for new repair facilities in Mayport, we owe it to our shipyard workers, the fleet and the American taxpayer to maintain our existing



shipyards properly," argues Democratic Senator Jim Webb, a former Navy secretary. Neither side mentions the real prize: the 6,000 jobs and \$400 million in annual local spending a carrier generates. Nor does either state note that the U.S. Navy has not had a real shooting war with another ship since World War II. And what is missing from this entire pork-pulling contest is whether we need that 11th carrier at all. "I do believe that strategic dispersion is a good thing," Admiral Gary Roughead, chief of naval operations, tells TIME. "My job is not to play the politics."

Of course, by spreading its carriers around, the Navy makes them harder to kill—but not because it's reducing their exposure to hurricanes or terrorists. Dispersion makes carriers harder to kill because more states become invested in their future. "It's a disease that infects the entire defense budget," says Gordon Adams, who oversaw Pentagon spending during the Clinton Administration. "We

spend about a third of the defense budget not for national-security reasons but because it's in someone's district or state."

**What's the Mission?**

THERE WAS A BRACING HONESTY IN CALLING the nation's military the Department of War until 1947. War was what the military did, and when it was over, in theory, the U.S. military could shrink to a garrison force. But following World War II, the Department of War became the Department of Defense, with a never ending mission and an ever expanding portfolio. "The United States has been at war for a startling two out of every three years since 1989, and there is no end in sight," observed University of Chicago professor John Mearsheimer in the *National Interest* in January. "Countries that continuously fight wars invariably build powerful national-security bureaucracies that undermine civil liberties and make it difficult to hold leaders accountable for their behavior." Last year the Pentagon's assessment of its must-do list expanded its roles in homeland defense, defeating insurgencies and terrorists, building allies' security forces, defeating those who would deny the U.S. military access to wherever it wants to go, stopping the proliferation of nuclear weapons and waging cyberwar. Even Gates, the budget cutter, has said, "The United States needs a broad portfolio of military capabilities with maximum versatility across the widest possible spectrum of conflict."

But the U.S. military is stretched too thinly around the globe to perform well in its many missions. In the past few years, a realist school of foreign policy thinkers has suggested it is time to rationalize our missions and curb our presence overseas. They call it offshore balancing. Instead of having the U.S. military provide the combat edge in places like Europe, Asia and the Persian Gulf, simply let its presence in those regions shrink and consign their fates to regional powers. This would mean a withdrawal of tens of thousands of U.S. troops in Europe and Asia and an end to the Marines' 66-year presence on Okinawa. South Korea can handle its northern neighbor absent U.S. troops, with offshore aid—intelligence and nuclear weapons

**Sixty crewmen from one ship recently pocketed \$3.4 million in reenlistment bonuses**

among them—coming from its longtime ally. The U.S. will never invade Iran. The U.S. military role there, should it come to war, would consist of air strikes and special operations missions, not an invasion of American troops.

The drain of waging war the old-fashioned way in Afghanistan and Iraq has forced the U.S. to swap boots on the ground for air and naval power in Libya, says Lawrence Korb, a Reagan-era Pentagon official. "We're doing the same thing in Pakistan and Yemen," he adds, "using special forces and drones." Such standoff methods could be applied to Afghanistan and Iraq once U.S. forces depart. But there are downsides to such a scheme. The Persian Gulf would fall more heavily under the sway of states like Iran and Russia, and Japan might feel the need to rearm if the U.S. folded its East Asian umbrella and went home. But leadership is all about making choices, and it's past time for Washington to recalibrate its rusty risk meter. Only by trimming missions can forces be cut, because that's where the real money is: payroll and procurement. Something will soon have to give. "The Pentagon budget reflects our commitments, but the problem is that a lot of our commitments are not essential to U.S. national security," says Christopher Preble, Cato's foreign policy chief. "We could reduce those commitments and leave the U.S. with a measure of safety and security that our ancestors would envy."

The size and shape of the U.S. military don't belong to the President, the Pentagon, contractors or Congress. Dwight Eisenhower, the last general to serve in the White House, knew something about balancing national security with prosperity. Most Americans recall Ike's warning "against the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex." But few recall what the World War II hero—the only five-star general ever to sit in the Oval Office—said next: "Only an alert and knowledgeable citizenry can compel the proper meshing of the huge industrial and military machinery of defense with our peaceful methods and goals so that security and liberty may prosper together."

For too long, an uninterested and distracted citizenry has been content to leave the messy business of national defense to those with bottom-line reasons for force-feeding it like a feral gray goose. It's long past time, like might have added today, for U.S. taxpayers to demand that its government spend what is needed to defend the country—not a penny more.

TIME April 25, 2011

## It's just too easy to launch an attack

Having U.S. bases and troops all over the globe encourages military intervention

By CHARLES PENNA  
For McClatchy-Tribune

The speed with which U.S. military forces were able to begin combat operations in Libya last month, following the president's order to intervene in the unfolding civil war, is a tribute to the professionalism and combat readiness of the U.S. armed forces.

But it also should give us great pause. Unless the United States has been attacked, military intervention should be a very difficult, sobering decision requiring painstaking reflection.

The trouble is: With U.S. forces now deployed all over the globe, military intervention has become too easy. If it wasn't so easy, perhaps we would do less of it.

Even before the United States went to war in Afghanistan and Iraq, nearly a quarter of all U.S. active duty forces — 250,000 of the more than 1 million men and women in the active duty military — were deployed overseas.

They're virtually everywhere — with installations in dozens of countries, including Greenland, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Qatar and Kyrgyzstan. In less enlightened times, some would call this an "empire."

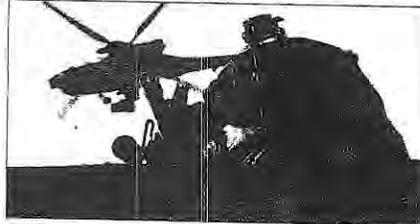
Although the Cold War is long since over and there is no threat of Soviet tanks bursting through the Potts Gap, one of the military fault lines that separated the former East and West Germany, the United States still has 50 Army installations and four Air Force bases in Germany. Elsewhere in Europe, we also have bases in Spain, Portugal, Netherlands, Italy, Bulgaria, Greece and Turkey. Who are we defending against what enemy and at what cost?

In East Asia, the United States has upward of 70,000 troops, mostly in Japan and South Korea.

We also have bases in Singapore, Australia, the Philippines and in the British territory of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean (not to mention the U.S. territory of Guam). In addition, one of our Navy's II carrier groups is based in Japan.

The problem with such a sprawling global military footprint, which also includes six U.S. "carrier groups" that typically are on deployment at any given time (each including an aircraft carrier, its air wings, cruise-missile armed cruisers, destroyers and attack submarines) is that it can encourage U.S. intervention by making it easy.

There are those who believe this is a good thing. In his memoirs, Gen. Colin Powell, former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, recalls a conversation with Secretary of State Madeleine Albright in which she allegedly argued, "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about, if we can't use it?" In other words, a good military is a terrible thing to waste.



A U.S. Army soldier stands guard on a rooftop as an Apache helicopter passes overhead in New Baghdad, Iraq, in 2006.

## Military: Smaller footprint would make it easy to say no

Continued from Page G1

how precisely employed, military force is still a blunt instrument intended to destroy and kill.

Ultimately, the only way to wean the United States from using the military to try to solve the world's problems — which are seldom solved by the use of force — is to reduce the size and footprint of U.S. forces.

The good news is that we can do so and still be safe.

America is fortunate to have friendly countries to the north and south and

two vast oceans on our flanks. We do not need to contain the Soviet Union — as we did during the Cold War — and there is no successor rival power on the horizon.

While we clearly have enemies, none has the power to seriously threaten the U.S. homeland.

The United States shouldn't be the first responder to crises that do not threaten our security, such as Libya. If U.S. forces weren't deployed here, there and everywhere, it would be much easier to say "no" when the rest of the world cries out for America to intervene.

Turn to MILITARY, Page G4

Charles Penna is a senior fellow of The Independent Institute, 100 Swan Way, Oakland, Calif. 94612, and author of "Winning the Un-War: A New Strategy for the War on Terrorism," website: www.independent.org.

**Comment ID: N-18863**

John King  
2537 Pacific Coast Hwy  
Suite 221D  
Torrance CA 90505  
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johnsonvalley.txt

Comment ID: N-18863  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study  
RE: Aviation

I submitted comments during the first scoping period and attended one of this years meetings.

I own airport FAA designator 7CA1 (Abraham Airport) in Johnson Valley.

In response I see that the proposed land acquisition area was moved northward and eastward from my airport and the neighboring airports 2CAS (B&E) and 31CA (Kelly).

I then studied the proposed airspace proposal for choice 6.

It places my airport underneath the restricted airspace.

I did observe the proposal to have a 1500 AGL shelf over my airport.

I am familiar with the ridges of land to the north and east of my airport.

I have studied the proposed exercise area and it is beyond those ridges I believe.

I am not aware of any restricted airspace that has a shelf underneath it.

I further do not know how the FAA would chart this shelf airspace since it is described in the study to be defined as underneath the restricted area but outside the proposed land

acquisition area which has a very jagged boundary.

I also do not know how pilots could navigate this shelf and how GPS manufacturers would display it.

I therefore would suggest that the land acquisition boundary and restricted airspace be located three miles from any airport.

**Response to Comment N-18863:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID: N-18864 (Page 1 of 12)**

Comment ID: N-18864  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL # 7010 0780 0000 4254 3249

May 26, 2011

MAGTFTC, MCAGCC  
Building 1554  
Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Re: Public Comment – Twentynine Palms Expansion DEIS

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This document constitutes both comments regarding subject DEIS and a solution that is consistent with National Defense Doctrine for the Real Parties of Interest. The People of the United States and the men and women of the American Defense Forces.

On January 31, 2009, I timely delivered my public comments by e-mail to Mr. Joseph Ross, Land Acquisition Manager at MAGTFTC, MCAGCC and upon request I received an e-mail acknowledging its timely receipt. In important part, my comments included a proposed ALTERNATIVE that included a TOPO map to establish a "379,585 acre Training Site" centrally located on the Gulf Coast, specifically on the boundary lines between Kansas and Oklahoma such that the U.S. Marines could "ramp up for a specific mission – to the West, East, North, and South – anywhere in the world – in the LEAST AMOUNT OF ASSEMBLY AND TRAVEL TIME."

I then called the contact number provided in the DEIS Notice and left a message to return my call such that I could acquire the official response to my public comments. No response. I then tried numerous times to make contact with personnel at MCAGCC but no response was forthcoming.

Perhaps part of the reasons for no response is that my 2009 public comment document stated that "It is apparent that the 'process' thus far has been POLITICALLY driven, rather than driven by the best civilian and military minds available," and "Simply stated the Center for Naval Analysis' . . . data would be inadequate to undertake even a startup of a LEMONADE STAND ON A NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER."

Nevertheless, I continued my research and analysis regarding what is really needed by the U.S. Marines as to the scope and location of an adequate Training Range.

**Here I would point out that America's 350 million residents live on only three percent of the total land mass of the United States.**

**Why are we quibbling about a million or two acres?**

**How is it that subject DEIS contains thousands of pages of environmental rhetoric, but does NOT address the key issue: American sovereignty?**

**Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 1 of 12):**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public

**Comment ID: N-18864 (Page 2 of 12)**

**Thus, how is it possible that the Twentynine Palms base is one of only two such bases in the United States – and the second base in Florida is being closed or has been closed down?**

**And protecting the Twentynine Palms Military Base “must be achieved,” yet the following issues have NOT been addressed?**

All of the “Base Expansion” programs via Congressional Legislation and related Appropriation Bills are one like the other, just the title of the Military Base changes, except that the Appropriation Bills DICTATE the outcome because of micromanagement of the process to conform with Environmental Law, paid for via the Defense Budget.

My position is that the process for Fort Erwin / National / Training Center has been underway since 2001 and it is NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE EXPANSION WAS COMPLETED AND DECLARED OPERATIONAL. OR AFTER 10 YEARS, IS IT STILL “A WORK IN PROGRESS”?

**SIMPLY STATED, THE 1.22 MILLION ACRES OF THE FORT ERWIN FACILITY SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR ALL THAT IS PLANNED FOR THE TWENTYNINE PALMS BASE, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE.**

**THUS THE TWENTYNINE PALMS BASE DEIS PROCESS MUST BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE STATUS OF ALL THE “BASE EXPANSIONS” THAT CONSTITUTE ABOUT 1/6<sup>TH</sup> OF THE LAND MASS IN THE REGION HAVE NOT BEEN COMPILED INTO A SINGLE DEIS DOCUMENT SUCH THAT THE ATTRIBUTUTES AND STATUS OF EACH FACILITY ARE DISCLOSED.**

**IT IS MY POSITION THAT THIS MUST BE TIMELY PERFORMED IN A “SUPPLEMENTAL DEIS/ DEIR.”**

Key points and issues follow, NONE OF WHICH WERE ADDRESSED IN ANY OF SUBJECT EIR’S FOR MILITARY BASES:

**FORT IRWIN EXPANSION, KEY ELEMENTS DOCUMENT  
Dated  
January 12, 2001  
  
KEY ELEMENTS  
OF  
PROPOSED EXPANSION PLAN  
FOR  
FORT IRWIN AND THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER**

**Executive Summary.**

Congress DIRECTED the Department of the Army and Department of Interior to draft a proposed plan that would expand the maneuver training lands at the National Training Center while protecting endangered and threatened species and their critical habitats; Public Law 106-554, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001,” incorporates by reference H.R. 5666, “Miscellaneous

**Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 2 of 12):**

Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: N-18864 (Page 3 of 12)

Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 3 of 12):

Appropriations.” Section 323 of which requires that the Secretaries jointly provide to Congress the key elements of the proposed expansion plan no later than 45 days after enactment. Within 90 days after enactment, the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service is to provide the Secretaries with a preliminary review of the plan that identifies an approach for implementing the plan consistent with the Endangered Species Act. Within 120 days of enactment, the Secretaries are required to submit a proposed expansion plan and to propose legislation for the withdrawal and reservation of public lands for the National Training Center expansion.

All activities are to be taken in full compliance with the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.

Introduction.

The National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, is the only instrumented training area in the world suitable for force-on-force and live fire training of heavy brigade-sized military forces. It provides the Army with essential training opportunities necessary to maintain and improve military readiness and promote national security. The NTC must be expanded to meet the critical need of the Army for additional training lands suitable for the maneuver of large numbers of military personnel and equipment, which is necessitated by advances in equipment, by doctrinal changes, and by Army Transformation requirements.

The lands being considered for expansion of the NTC are home to the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Lane Mountain milkvetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*), which are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), 16 U.S.C. §§1531 et seq. Any plan for the expansion of the NTC must provide for such expansion in a manner that complies with the ESA, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§4321 et seq., and other applicable laws.

By legislation, Public Law 106-554, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001,” incorporating by reference H.R. 5666, “Miscellaneous Appropriations,” Section 323, entitled “Fort Irwin National Training Center Expansion” (Attachment 1), Congress directed the Secretaries of the Interior and Army to:

Within 45 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress a joint report on key elements of a proposed plan to expand the NTC and to provide for conservation measures;

Within 90 days of enactment, obtain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (FWS) preliminary review of the proposed expansion plan for the purpose of identifying an approach for implementing the plan consistent with the ESA;

Within 120 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress a proposed expansion plan that takes into account the content of the FWS’s preliminary review; and

Within 120 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress proposed legislation providing for withdrawal and reservation of public lands for the expansion of the NTC;

Initiate as soon as practicable, and complete within 24 months of enactment, consultation required under Section 7 of the ESA;

**IS IT NOT ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO PERFORM  
THE ABOVE STEPS IN A THROUGH MANNER  
IN A MATTER OF A FEW DAYS, NOT MONTHS AND YEARS?**

Within 30 months of enactment, complete any analysis required under NEPA.

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**Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 4 of 12):**

THE FOLLOWING RHETORIC IS THE SAME FOR SUBJECT DEIR.

III. Fort Irwin and the National Training Center.

A. Establishment, Purpose, and Mission.

In 1940, President Roosevelt established the Mojave Anti-Aircraft Range, a military reservation of 1,000 square miles, in the area of present-day Fort Irwin. In 1942, the post was re-named Camp Irwin in honor of Major General G. Leroy Irwin, World War I commander of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade. The post was deactivated in 1944. It was reactivated in 1951 as a training center for combat units in the Korean War.

The post was designated a permanent Class 1 installation in August 1961 and was designated Fort Irwin. During the Viet Nam buildup, many units, primarily artillery and engineer, were trained and deployed to Southeast Asia directly from the post.

In January 1971, the post was again deactivated and placed in maintenance status under the control of Fort McArthur, California. Despite deactivation, the post continued to serve as a training site for the National Guard and Army Reserve.

On October 16, 1980, Fort Irwin was selected from several candidates to become the site of the new National Training Center. On July 1, 1981 Fort Irwin was reactivated as an active installation.

The mission of the NTC since its inception has been to provide tough, realistic combined arms and joint training to be conducted under conditions that must remain relevant to the combat situations our forces must face.

Advances in weaponry, demands in logistics and command/control, and developments in information technology emphasize the need to train brigades across the full spectrum of operations.

Such training carries the added benefit of allowing brigades to be trained with their full complement of combat and support units during each NTC rotational training exercise.

These larger training operations enhance the development of doctrine and technology for the future.

The NTC is limited by its current available acreage to provide a realistic training environment to meet the expanding needs of Army brigades.

B. Need for Expansion.

The expansion of the NTC at Fort Irwin is essential to maintaining operational readiness for National Security.

It is the only instrumented training area in the world suited for force-on-force and live fire training of heavy brigade-sized and battalion task forces. Advances in equipment (e.g., longer engagement ranges of weapon systems), doctrinal changes (expansion of the battle space by at least a factor of four), and the ongoing Army Transformation require the expansion.

Because of advances in weapon systems, brigades and battalions are required to cover more ground; they operate in dispersed areas of operation; mass to conduct decisive combat operations; and then disperse again.

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Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 5 of 12):

*It is my position that subject "New Doctrine" is FATALLY FLAWED because the New Doctrine may be able to TAKE ground during BATTLE, but would be UNABLE to KEEP the ground upon ATTACK by a subsequent MASSED offensive by the enemy because of the LACK of an ADEQUATE level of US Soldiers deployed in the "Field of Battle," thus incurring US Soldier casualties for which there can be NO possible justification*

*And THIS New Doctrine was propounded by President Bush Sr. during the 1990-1991 "Persian Gulf War" that Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen Colin Powell's "Desert Shield" doctrine CREATED as the only option available to overcome the Democrats' 1970's "Vietnam Peace Benefit" that was FUNDED by CUTTING IN HALF military personnel, Defense Dept R & D, etc., and thus the military budget... totaling Billions of Dollars... that Congressional Democrats' spent wildly and freely... and are STILL doing so today as shown by subject "Twenty-nine Palms Expansion" which DUPLICATES BOTH THE INTENT AND THE CONTENT IMPOSED BY THE ABOVE 2001 "FORT IRWIN EXPANSION" DOCUMENT.*

**Key Points and Issues  
That are NOT Addressed in Subject DEIR**

Units are [now] required to cover and operate over more ground than ever before -- 50km x 100km, as opposed to the 26km x 58km-maneuver space currently available.

These factors drive the Army's requirement for additional maneuverable training land at the NTC to accommodate brigade-sized and battalion task force training operations.

When Fort Irwin was designated the NTC in 1980, tactics were structured around equipment that could effectively engage an enemy at ranges of 1 to 12 miles.

Today, the Army effectively engages the enemy at ranges up to 60 miles away.

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Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 6 of 12):

Also, the pace of tactical operations has increased from 10 miles per hour to more than 25 miles per hour. The effectiveness of NTC training were first demonstrated during Desert Storm [in Nov 1990, with MUCH hoopla], and the success of the Army during Desert Storm was directly attributable to having trained with these new weapon systems at the NTC.

**RESEARCH AND ANALYSIS FINDINGS**

	31.07 62.14 93.21	16.16 36.04 52.20	Depth = Height	Depth = Height	Width	Width	Square	Per Side	Acres
			km	mi	km	mi	Miles	Miles	
Finding	Minimum		93.21	58.32	62.14	39.25	521.24	22.83	333,592
Finding	Maximum		103.87	64.55	62.14	39.25	1,389.97	37.28	889,579
Finding			Of the 31.07 H x 62.14 W Miles		Needed	ONLY 9.37 H x 62.14 W Miles	Enough		345,948
Calc Dimensions For Irwin	Exact		9.37	100	62.14	39.25	24.13		372,838
Finding	New Doctrine per Vietnam Gulf War - "Desert Storm" Campaign			100	62.14	39.25	43.94		1,235,527
Finding	Irwin - Exact		16.16	100	62.14	39.25	24.13		372,838
Finding	Var - minimum New Doctrine			Need 3. Fenester's	Maximum		540.51	23.25	345,948
Finding	True Acres that should be Added to Irwin 8 Var						1,348.27	36.72	852,892
Calc and Recon Actual Acreage "Added" to Fort Irwin for "Expansion"									
Parcel 1	[West] Superior Valley						99.49	9.97	63,673
Parcel 2	East Gate						72.56	8.52	46,438
Sub Total	Sum of Parcel 1 & 2						172.05	13.12	110,111
RECON Area of NTC to be Returned for Training Use									
Calc Dimensions	30.00	18.64	3.00	1.88	34.55	5.88			22,139
Adjusted	Recon "Retained"	30.00	18.64	3.00	1.88	34.75	5.89		22,239
Finding		30.00	18.64	0.01	0.01	0.16	0.40		100.00
Repeat Acres 9/8/22/135 WRONG by 100 Acres *									
Recon Ok	Total Area Opened for Needed New OTF Idor						206.80	14.38	132,350
A Political "Joke" NOT a Military Defense Training Site *****									
Total	Calc Dimensions	30.00	18.64	123.07	11.09	206.80	14.38		132,350
A Joke ----- *									

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Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 7 of 12):

New Area Determined by Land Use Requirements Studies >>>>>>						193,000.00		
Requirement Training Use at National Training Center NTC								
Calc Dimensions	30.00	18.64	26.03	16.16	301.56	17.37	193,000.00	
						A. Joke		
Recon	Var = Area Denied Defense Dept. by Congress = 1/3					94.77	9.73	69,650

Recon Area Created to Expand Existing Enviro "Fort Irwin Study Site"

Public Law 106-554 authorizes appropriation of \$75 million to the Secretary of the Army for conservation measures necessary to comply with th ESA for listed species impacted by the Expansion of Fort Irwin

	Square kilometers	Square Miles	Width km	Width mi	Square Miles	Per Side Miles	Acres
Size of EXISTING Enviro "Fort Irwin Study Site"	1.22	0.76			0.76	0.87	484
Withdraw from the Existing Fort Irwin to EXPAND the EXISTING Enviro "Fort Irwin Study Site"	8.78	5.46			5.46	2.34	3,493
Total ACEC Area s/ib 10 ftib >	6.21				6.21	2.49	3,977
Recon >	10.00	6.21	< Ok				

Create 500 Square Kilometer "Area of Critical Environmental Concern" (ACEC)

The BLM will designate an approximately 500 square kilometer area just south of Fort Irwin as an "Area of Critical Environmental Concern" (ACEC)

Create New East Alvord Mountain Research Nat'l Facility

Sq km	Sq Mi	Sq Mi	Per Side	Acres
500	310.69	310.69	17.63	198,839

Approximatly 3100 ares of EXISTING Fort Irwin lands will become PART of THIS A

This area encompasses critical habitat for the Desert Tortoise and establishes a Land Bridge [i.e., a "Migration Corridor"] between populations of Desert Tortoise located East and West of the installation [i.e., NTC]

It also assures that Fort Irwin will NOT be expanded [any more] to the South in the future

The BLM will manage this ACEC for the protection and conservation of the Desert Tortois and habitat and for research on the Desert Tortoise

Requirement	Withdraw 3100 Acres from Existing Fort Irwin NTC RDD to Enviro "Study Area"	4.84	2.20	3,100
See recon above				
Finding	TOTAL New East Alvord Mountain Research Nat'l Facility	316.90	19.83	202,815.56

Category	Description	Acres	Percentage	Total
Enviro Areas	Total Enviro Areas under this Bill	316.90	22.16	202,816
Military Areas	Total Fort Irwin Military Expansion	206.60	18.49	132,350
Acres	Military and Enviro Areas created by this bill	523.70	40.66	335,166
Existing	Enviro Acres Exceeds Base Expansion By	110.10	11.67	76,485.36
Acres	Statewide (not on) from BLM per a BOVE	431.24	71.81	333,592
Percent	Variance between Legislative Bill outcome of Acreages	7.48	1.87	1,573

C. History and Alternatives.

In the mid-1980s, the need for additional land for training at the NTC was identified because of changes in doctrine, equipment, and tactics. This need was subsequently validated and quantified by two Land Use Requirements Studies (LURS).

["Studies" performed by WHO? - "The Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria, VA" [aka] "The Center for Naval Analysis" that performed the "study" to expand the "Twentynine Palms Marine Base"? Equals "Junk Science !!!"]

The studies indicated a shortfall of about 193,000 net maneuverable acres on the NTC to adequately meet training needs. Various alternatives were developed and studied to enable the NTC to meet the needs identified in the LURS. These alternatives included variations of land configurations adjacent to the NTC, as well as use of other military installations. Each of the studied alternatives presented disadvantages as to impacts on the environment, training value of the land, cost, and co-use complications.

The Army has identified a proposed expansion plan that incorporates the advantages of both an eastern and western expansion.

This alternative involves acquisition of approximately 110,000 new acres on the east and southwest sides of the existing NTC and the return to training use of about 22,000 acres in the south that are currently set aside [for WHAT?] on the NTC. While this total is less than the 193,000 acres identified in the LURS, it satisfies the most critical needs [WHAT?] for additional maneuver lands, while taking into account the Army's environmental stewardship responsibilities.

IV. West Mojave Desert.

A. Endangered and Threatened Species

Twelve federally listed threatened and endangered species are found within the West Mojave Desert. These include endemic plants with a very limited range to wide ranging species that are endangered by disease and human-related actions. An additional 106 unlisted species have been identified as target species for protection by the West Mojave Desert Coordinated Management Plan (West Mojave Plan), a habitat conservation plan that is being prepared in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. §1539(a)(1)(B). This plan is described in greater detail in section C of this part of the Report.

Two listed species occur within the proposed Fort Irwin expansion area -- the desert tortoise and the Lane Mountain milkvetch. Training activities on the proposed Fort Irwin expansion lands will not proceed unless the Army determines, pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. §1536(a)(2), and

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Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 9 of 12):

in consultation with the FWS, that the training activities will not be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species or destroy or adversely modify any designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as areas that contain the physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species, and that may require special management considerations or protection. In 1994, the FWS designated critical habitat for the desert tortoise that includes substantial tracts of land on and around Fort Irwin, including the Superior Valley portion of the proposed expansion area. 59 Fed. Reg. 5820-5866 (1994). The FWS has not designated critical habitat for the Lane Mountain milkvetch.

While the proposed expansion area does encompass desert tortoise habitat, it avoids the important tortoise habitat immediately south and southwest of the proposed expansion area, including the Paradise Valley and the Coyote Basin. Based on surveys [by WHOM?] completed in 1998 and 1999, these areas apparently [i.e., NO evidence of] support some of the highest numbers of desert tortoises remaining in the West Mojave Desert.

While the desert tortoise has received most of the attention during the longstanding efforts by Interior and Army to accommodate an expansion of Fort Irwin, the milkvetch presents equally challenging questions to address during the consultation process. Two of the three known occurrences of the Lane Mountain milkvetch are within the proposed expansion area, and these are located within areas susceptible to training maneuvers (20% slopes). Other potential impacts of the proposed expansion that could occur on or off the expansion area include, but are not limited to, dust and obscurants. Potential habitat exists, however, outside the proposed expansion area on Lane Mountain and in the Paradise Range, and efforts will be made during the pre-consultation period to locate other populations in these and perhaps other areas outside the proposed expansion area.

A number of unlisted, but sensitive, plants and animals occur within the proposed expansion area. Animals include the LeComte's thrasher, Bendire's thrasher, golden eagle, prairie falcon, burrowing owl, and the state-listed Mohave ground squirrel. Major populations are present for LeComte's thrasher and Mohave ground squirrel. Plants include small-flowered androstaphylos, desert cymopterus, Barstow woolly sunflower, alkali mariposa lily, and Clokey's cryptantha. The small annual plant, Clokey's cryptantha, is known from only two locations, and about half of its predicted distribution is within the proposed expansion area. Many of the mitigation measures that will be implemented to protect listed species, especially land acquisition, should have a salutary impact on these unlisted species.

B. Description and Purpose of West Mojave Desert Wildlife Management Areas.

The Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan (1994) recommended that four Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) be established within the West Mojave Desert: Superior-Cronese, Fremont-Kramer, Ord-Rodman, and Joshua Tree.

These areas consist of approximately 1.5 million acres of habitat that is considered essential to the conservation of tortoises.

Through the West Mojave planning process, biologists used 1998 and 1999 tortoise survey information, land ownership patterns, and discussion with scientists and [what?] agency personnel to propose DWMA boundaries for consideration by the West Mojave Supergroup, a group that includes federal, state, and local agency officials, as well as representatives of the environmental community and development interests.

The Superior Valley portion of the proposed expansion area lies within the Superior-Cronese DWMA.

**If the proposed expansion goes forward, the boundaries of this DWMA will need to be changed to exclude most of these lands.**

C. Description and Purpose of Wilderness Study Areas.

Five former BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) identified in the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan lie adjacent to the National Training Center. The Death Valley National Park Boundary, Kingston, Avawatz Mountains, South Avawatz Mountains, and Soda Mountains WSAs were legislatively designated in October 1994 by the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) [S-21] and the public lands withdrawn from entry.

**The CDPA allowed these areas to remain under wilderness review pending a final decision on the National Training Center expansion.**

[PROOF - The "implementation rules" in THIS document all but PRECLUDE "Fort Irwin" from EVER being authorized to be as stated herein [FIND OUT IF IT WAS!], THUS leaving ALL the above areas being ABSORBED in Feinstein/Scarry Harry's 2011 Desert Protection Act - ALONG WITH THE "TWENTYNINE PALMS [29Palms]" BASE EXPANSION that has been set with similar "implementation rules" as has likely the "El Centro" base expansion - CREATING "ENVIRO HEAVEN" and 1,000s of ENVIRO JOBS - AND VOTES - LEAVING THE MILITARY CRIPPLED AND AMERICA DEFENSELESS.]

If Fort Irwin expands as proposed, conserving sensitive species in the western Mojave Desert will become more difficult, because most of the lands in the proposed expansion area will no longer be available for species conservation purposes.

The conservation measures proposed as part of the expansion should be taken into account as the West Mojave Coordinated Management Plan is developed.

Consequently, the development of the West Mojave Coordinated Management Plan and the proposed expansion of Fort Irwin should be coordinated closely to ensure that the adverse and beneficial impacts of both actions can be fully considered in the decision-making processes.



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Move Various Lands Into the Mojave Nat'l Preserve



Transfer BLM Managed Lands to Joshua Tree NP



Transfer BLM Land to State, Only After All Mining Claims are TERMINATED Retain Prior Existing Rights!



All mining, Entry, Patents, etc are Terminated  
 And All subject land shall be managed under the CA Wilderness Act  
 If State fails to do so the land REVERTS back to the BLM

Total Sq Mi For 'Ologist / Enviro Use > 116.94 10.81 74,839.00  
 Equiv Townships > 3.25

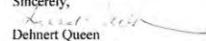
Transfer BLM Managed Lands to HOV Status, Retain Valid Existing Rights



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Response to Comment N-18864 (Page 12 of 12):

Finding	S-21 UPDT Calc Dimensions	<b>Resor Valley (Ranch) Newly Designated OHV</b>	18.64	1.00	35.00	5.92	22,400
		A, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z					
		3.95 Miles Southwest Zzyxx, CA					
Finding	S-21 UPDT Calc Dimensions	<b>Spangler Hills Newly Designated OHV</b>	18.64	5.20	97.00	9.85	62,000
		A, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z					
		9.90 Miles Southeast of Ridgecrest, CA					
Finding	S-21 UPDT Calc Dimensions	<b>Stoddard Valley</b>	18.64	4.54	85.00	9.22	54,400
		A, J, K, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W, X, Y, Z					
		5.75 Miles South of Banstow, CA 23.50 Miles North of Lucerne Valley, CA					
		<b>Total Sq Mi For Public Use (HOV) &gt;</b>	498.25	22.32			318,800.00
		<b>Equiv Townships &gt;</b>	13.84				
		<b>Total BLM Lands Transferred to All Entities &gt;</b>	615.19	24.80			393,719.00
		<b>Equiv Townships &gt;</b>	17.09				

Sincerely,  
  
 Dehnert Queen  
 Lucerne Valley, CA  
 215-500-6544

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Response to Comment N-18865 (Page 1 of 6):

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

GRESHAM SAVAGE

Amanda.Schneider@GreshamSavage.com • San Bernardino Office  
(909) 896-1495 • Fax (909) 896-0872

Comment ID: N-18865  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 26, 2011

VIA EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
Proposed 29 Palms Training Land/Airspace Establishment Project  
MAGTFIC, MCA GCC  
Bldg. 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Re: Comments to Proposed Twentynine Palms Land Acquisition/Airspace  
Establishment Project Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Proudfoot:

On behalf of TETRA Technologies, Inc. ("Tetra"), we are submitting this letter to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the proposed land acquisition to expand the Marine Corps facility. As you know, Tetra is a company that specializes in certain chemical production and oil and gas services. Tetra owns and operates two calcium chloride/sodium chloride production facilities that are located in the eastern study area of the proposed land acquisition, considered in Alternative 3 of the EIS, where it produces calcium chloride and sodium chloride by solar evaporation of naturally occurring brines beneath the operations. These two operations, the "Amboy Operation" and the "Lee Operation," are generally located to the east of the existing Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base, in southeastern San Bernardino County, primarily in T3N R12E, T4N R12E, T3N R15E, and T2N R15E, San Bernardino Meridian.

As we stated in our letter to Mr. Joseph Ross, dated January 29, 2009, we believe that our operations will be significantly impaired or potentially terminated if the eastern study area is selected for inclusion in the land acquisition. As such, we appreciate the Department of the Navy taking our concerns into consideration and agree with the Department's determination that Alternative 6, encompassing the western and southern study areas, is the preferred alternative and best way to achieve the three fundamental components of the proposed project.

100

07600744 • 1-877-829-2263 • Fax (909) 896-0872  
2500 La Tijera Blvd., Suite 200 • San Bernardino, CA 92406  
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Response to Comment N-18865 (Page 2 of 6):

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I. Acquisition of Land and Operational Feasibility.

The Draft EIS discusses threshold requirements for an alternative to be considered feasible. Action alternatives must be capable of providing land and associated airspace necessary to meet the minimum criteria. In addition, the alternatives were considered based on objective requirements for evaluating the desirability of an alternative. The stated objective requirements included the following: (i) Independent, offensive maneuver of three battalion task forces abreast and associated air combat element operations, with the three battalion task forces converging on a single MEB objective; (ii) 48-72 hours of continuous offensive operations by the three battalion task forces as they converge on a single MEB objective; and (iii) Integrated air and ground maneuver live-fire with optimized freedom of action to the greatest extent practicable considering operational range capabilities and munitions safety requirements. (DEIS at 2-83-84)

Alternative 3, comprising the east study area, although allowing for three battalion task forces to converge on a single MEB objective, has terrain features that limit the ability to fire and maneuver in the study area. Specifically, dry lake beds and Amboy Road would impose limitations that would not occur in the western study area. The two battalion task forces would be funneled between the dry lake bed and the Sheephole Wilderness area. In addition to this restriction on operations, these battalion task forces would have to administratively cross Amboy Road at hardened crossings, which does not provide the best operational simulation of terrain conditions. Further, live-fire would have to be restricted in the east study area in order to safeguard civilian traffic on Amboy Road. (DEIS at 2-84)

The Preferred Alternative, as well as other study alternatives utilizing the west study area, however, are more desirable from an operational standpoint. Alternative 1, meets all of the optimal requirements and would not impose any training restrictions. The Preferred Alternative mitigates some of the environmental impacts of Alternative 1, and still provides a more desirable training area from an operational standpoint. The Preferred Alternative also allows for all three battalion task forces to converge on a single MEB objective. It does not have terrain restrictions such as dry lake beds or Amboy Road. Live-fire is also not restricted in order to protect civilian safety. The one training restriction Alternative 6 imposes—the limited use of dud-producing ordnance due to the restricted public access designation of a portion of the west study area—still meets the optimal requirements for MEB training. (*Id.*) As such, we agree that the Preferred Alternative is the best way to accomplish the Marine Corps training objectives as it not only takes the public into consideration, but also allows for a more optimal training scenario from an operational standpoint.

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II. Impact on Transportation and Safety.

The east study area is the only area which considers the closure of a major road. Amboy Road is the principal route between Twentynine Palms, California and the Interstate 40 corridor to the north of the Combat Center. (Draft EIS at 2-85) Implementation of Alternative 3 would involve the closure of Amboy Road for two days out of the year. While signs could be put in place to advise the public of the closure of Amboy Road in advance, the complete road closure would be significant, as the general public could not access a route to Interstate 40 for more than 30 miles beyond Amboy Road. (Draft EIS at 4.6-6) In addition, tanks would cross Amboy Road as part of the training exercise. This would involve the installation of four concrete tank crossings over North Amboy Road which would be required to minimize the impacts to the roadway from the military vehicles. (Draft EIS at 4.4-14)

The Preferred Alternative would not restrict public access to any paved roads or traffic thoroughfares. (Draft EIS at 4.6-8) As the Preferred Alternative would not involve use of public roads, potential transportation impacts would primarily occur due to trespasser interference. (See Draft EIS at 4.4-7) Because these impacts can be mitigated, the potential impacts to safety based on transportation are greatly reduced as compared to Alternative 3.

In addition to impacts on Amboy Road and vehicular transportation, the east study area also contains railroad line crossings, increasing the risk of injuries or impacts related to ground transportation in the east study area. Railroad line crossings have the potential to occur during ground training activities, and these crossings may disrupt rail traffic or result in accidents between military vehicles and train cars. There is also the potential that ordnance may strike rail cars in transit during training activities. The Combat Center does not currently have a protocol to deal with these types of impacts, and would have to develop some standards if the east study area were acquired for the expansion of the Center. (Draft EIS at 4.4-14) Railroad lines are not present in the west study area, eliminating these potential transportation and safety related impacts from the Preferred Alternative.

III. Impact on Socioeconomics.

As we stated in our January 29, 2009 letter, Tetra's operations are an important part of the local economy. Tetra directly employs 22 people at its operations within the eastern study area, paying a total of \$775,000 in salary each year. Tetra also spends \$2,100,000 per year to ship and transfer its products, and spends \$3,800,000 per year in California to produce its products. Alternative 3 could require the closure of Tetra's operations, as well as the operations of other mines and agricultural lands in the area. (Draft EIS at 4.1-11)

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The closure of mining operations in the east study area would be significant and inconsistent with the California Desert Conservation Area ("CDCA") Plan's multiple use objectives, which include provisions for mining access and approved permits allowing for the operation of Tetra's and National Chloride's mines in the east study area. Further, the BLM has assigned a Known Sodium Leasing Area (43 Code of Federal Regulations 2400) land classification to lands in the vicinity of the mines, indicating its intent to retain access to mineral resources without interference from other users. (Draft EIS at 4.1-11)

As such, adoption of Alternative 3 would create economic impacts due to the loss of mining production and the associated income that is the result of the production, transportation, and use of the sodium chloride product. Relocating these mines may be costly and potentially infeasible. Furthermore, preclusion of access to these mineral resources would result in adverse impacts on mining in the future. (Draft EIS at 4.1-12) In addition to the economic impacts, acquisition of the east study area would conflict with BLM policy, which recognizes the need to continue mining in the area without interference. Alternative 6 would avoid all of these impacts, as no active mines are present. (Draft EIS at 4.1-17)

Alternative 3 also creates fewer Combat Center jobs than the other considered alternatives. Due to the configuration of the land and training capabilities, Alternative 3 would create approximately 59 new jobs at the Combat Center. Alternative 3 would result in the loss of approximately 135 jobs as a result of displaced businesses. As such, Alternative 3 would result in a net loss in regional sales, income and employment. (Draft EIS at 4.3-17-18) Although this was found to be less than significant, the Preferred Alternative offers a combined increase in income due to the creation of additional Combat Center jobs. Specifically, the Preferred Alternative would create approximately 110 jobs and would realize a beneficial combined impact from a net gain in regional sales, income and employment. This personnel increase would offset any impacts due to the loss of recreational or film industry spending. Further, the area has the capacity to support any additional demand for housing or services. (Draft EIS at 4.3-27)

Alternative 3 has the potential to result in the loss of 135 jobs, while only creating 59 Combat Center jobs. Further, Alternative 3 could result in the loss of mining operations and associated revenues and property taxes. The impacts of Alternative 6 primarily concern recreation and film industry impacts. While the loss of a portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would result in some detrimental impacts on those industries, the Combat Center would realize an increase in 135 jobs. This increase in personnel and their families would increase spending in the area and overall, the impacts would be beneficial. Further, existing businesses in the east study area would

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Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
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be retained, further preserving revenue in the area. Because Alternative 6 would realize a net socioeconomic benefit, we concur in the determination that it is the Preferred Alternative.

IV. Impact on Air Quality.

Impacts to air quality can occur due to both construction activities as well as operations. Generally, all of the proposed alternatives would have similar air quality impacts, although Alternative 3 produces additional significant impacts to National Ambient Air Quality Standards ("NAAQS"). Because of these additional impacts, the Preferred Alternative and acquisition of the west study area is preferable to Alternative 3 from an Air Quality standpoint.

Construction activities under all alternatives would produce similar impacts. Operationally, however, Alternative 3 would generate more combustive and fugitive dust emissions from tactical vehicles and tactical support equipment due to vehicles needing to travel greater distances based on the location of the proposed assembly areas. (Draft EIS at 4.8-10) Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in greater PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, exceeding the NAAQS standard. Alternative 3 is the only alternative that would result in significant air quality impacts. Accordingly, we agree that Alternative 6 is preferable as both an operational alternative, and an environmental alternative.

V. Impact on Recreation.

There have been arguments that acquisition of the east study area should be the preferred alternative due to impacts on recreation should the Johnson Valley OHV Area be acquired, and there is concern that the Preferred Alternative would result in greater socioeconomic impacts due to the impact on OHV use and loss of income from businesses supporting OHV use and recreation. We agree with the findings in the Draft EIS that Alternative 6 mitigates these concerns by retaining public access to a large portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, namely, 82,802 usable acres, or approximately 44 percent of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, would be available for public recreation 10 months per year. (Draft EIS at 4.1-16)

The Preferred Alternative maintains the Cougar Buttes, Anderson Dry Lake, and Soggy Dry Lack OHV staging and camping areas, as well as several popular OHV trails including Bullfrog, Cakewalk, Chicken Rock, and Hammerdown Trails for public use year round, and keeps the area available for other public activities such as hiking, picnicking, photography, geocaching, and wildlife and wildflower viewing. The restricted public access area also permits OHV use on 38,137 acres for ten months out of the year, and includes a major staging area, Means Dry Lake, as well as several

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Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
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popular trails, including the "Hammer" trails. (Draft EIS at 4.2-19)

Thus, although Alternative 6, the Preferred Alternative, will result in the loss of a portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, some of the most popular and unique trails and staging and camping areas are preserved either year round or within the restricted public access area. By preserving these areas, as well as maintaining public and private land used for mining and agriculture within the east study area, the Marine Corps is able to obtain an operationally feasible expansion area, preserve recreational opportunities, and reduce socioeconomic impacts due to loss of mining and recreational lands.

We agree with the Department of Navy's determination that Alternative 6 is the Preferred Alternative for the reasons stated above and appreciate the Department's consideration of our concerns expressed in our letter dated January 29, 2009. Please contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,



Amanda E. Schneider, for  
GRESHAM SAVAGE  
NOLAN & TILDEN,  
A Professional Corporation

AES:jmk

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

Comment ID: N-18866  
Date Received: May 31, 2011

May 26, 2011

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
Naval Facilities Engineering  
Command, Southwest  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Land Acquisition and Airspace  
Establishment to Support Large-scale MAGTF Live-Fire and Maneuver Training  
at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California  
(CEQ # 20110051)

Dear Mr. Proudfoot:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced document pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and our NEPA review authority under Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) evaluates the impacts from the proposed establishment of a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California, involving the acquisition of adjacent public and private land, establishing and modifying special use airspace above the training range, and conducting sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for all elements of the Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

Based on our review, we have rated the DEIS's Preferred Alternative 6 as Environmental Concerns – Adequate (EC-1) (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions"). We have concerns regarding impacts to water and biological resources, including the threatened desert tortoise. We are also concerned that the exclusion of recreationalists from large portions of the heavily-used Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area could result in transferred impacts to other more sensitive areas. We recommend that the Marine Corps give further consideration to Alternative 5, which the DEIS identifies as the Environmentally Preferable Alternative. Alternative 5 would meet the Marine Corps' minimum training requirements, potentially reduce transferred impacts from OHV users for most of the year, and result in lower adverse impacts than the Preferred Alternative.

EPA appreciates the opportunity to review this DEIS. When the Final EIS is released for public review, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CED-2). If you have any

GEN-1

Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 1 of 7):

GEN-1:

Thank you for your comment. The contact information provided has been added to the project mailing list as requested.

NEPA-1:

Section 4.13 addresses the potential impacts on groundwater quality, and concludes that because of the ongoing management and minimization of Munitions Constituent residues at the Combat Center and implementation of management and minimization of Munitions Constituent residues in the acquisition area, impacts to surface water quality Munitions Constituents would be less than significant. The low precipitation rate, intermittent receiving surface water bodies, and deep groundwater, limits the migration of Munitions Constituent residues and thus the potential impacts of use of munitions.

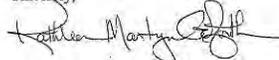
Chapter 2 of the EIS has been revised to include a more detailed description of the current range clearance operations. As discussed in Section 3.4.2.1, the Marine Corps' Range Environmental Assessment (REVA) program uses an EPA-approved screening model for Munitions Constituents in surface and groundwater. The REVA evaluation occurs every 5 years and the first reassessment began in October 2010. Confirmatory sampling will occur if a future REVA evaluation indicates there is a source, pathway, and receptor with detectable levels of Munitions Constituents.

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questions, please contact me at (415) 972-3521, or contact Karen Vitulano, the lead reviewer for this project, at 415-947-4178 or [vitulano.karen@epa.gov](mailto:vitulano.karen@epa.gov).

} GEN-1

Sincerely,



Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager  
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure: Summary of EPA Rating Definitions  
EPA's Detailed Comments

**Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 2 of 7):**

**WAT-1:**

The well field in the Surprise Spring Basin is in a restricted area where maneuvering or live fire is prohibited. This area is shown in Figure 1-6 and Figure 1-12 of the EIS. The Combat Center has a water quality monitoring plan (2009) that evaluated the risks to the wells and an on-going water quality monitoring program. No direct live fire or maneuvering in the restricted area is part of any of the alternatives. The restricted area and the water quality monitoring program adequately address the protection of the water supply drinking wells.

**WAT-2:**

Playas are not Waters of the USA per Swank vs. Cook County; therefore, a wetland delineation at the Combat Center is unnecessary. Note that a planning level wetland delineation was completed by Lichvar and Pringle (USACE) in 1993. The main features were waters of the US, 289 washes and 14 playas were classified as waters of the US in that report.

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**SUMMARY OF EPA RATING DEFINITIONS\***

This rating system was developed as a means to summarize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) level of concern with a proposed action. The ratings are a combination of alphabetical categories for evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposal and numerical categories for evaluation of the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION**

***"LO" (Lack of Objections)***

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

***"EC" (Environmental Concerns)***

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

***"EO" (Environmental Objections)***

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

***"EU" (Environmentally Unsatisfactory)***

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

**ADEQUACY OF THE IMPACT STATEMENT**

***Category "1" (Adequate)***

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

***Category "2" (Insufficient Information)***

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

***Category "3" (Inadequate)***

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

\*From EPA Manual 1640, Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment.

Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 3 of 7):

**WAT-3:**

The impacts to ephemeral streams or intermittent washes are discussed on page 4.13-5 in section 4.13.2.1. The impacts to ephemeral streams or intermittent washes are discussed on page 4.13-5 in section 4.13.2.1. The EIS mentions that exercises avoid playas to the extent possible. Specifically, "Combat Center Order 5090.1D (MAGTF Training Command 2006) provides general guidance for avoiding impacts to natural resources, as well as specific guidance for avoiding disturbance of playas or other sensitive areas. The existing INRMP and compliance under Combat Center Order 5090.1D applies to existing and continued use in the Combat Center and would be expanded to cover the acquisition areas."

**NEPA-2:**

Thank you for your comment.

**BIO-1:**

Comment noted. An update on the Section 7 ESA consultation process has been included in the EIS, and the conservation measures that have been developed during the consultation process are described in Section 2.8.

**CR-1:**

Updated information in regards to traditional cultural properties and tribal consultation will be added to Section 4.11 of the EIS as available.

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EPA DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE 29 PALMS TRAINING LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE ESTABLISHMENT STUDY DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT, TWENTYNINE PALMS, CALIFORNIA, MAY 26, 2011

Water Resources

Water Quality

The DEIS discusses the Range Environmental Vulnerability Assessment (REVA) from 2008. This was a baseline assessment of the operational range areas which used a fate and transport modeling/analysis of munitions constituents based on site environmental conditions. This assessment did not appear to be based on any actual sampling data. The REVA concluded that there is potential for munitions constituents to be transported offsite, with the greatest potential occurring from the Lead Mountain area to Bristol Dry Lake and from the Prospect area to Dale Lake. Despite this, the DEIS concludes that, due to low potential for off-site transport, indirect impacts to off-site surface waters would be less than significant (p. 4.13-4). The model results predicted that concentrations of some munitions constituents would exceed trigger levels, but the DEIS states that the levels were below toxicity thresholds for sensitive indicator species (p. 4.13-4). The Executive Summary of the REVA references the toxicity threshold for reptiles, but does not mention other eco-receptors, such as wintering waterfowl or terrestrial birds and mammals.

The DEIS references DoD Instruction 3200.16 – Operational Range Clearance, and cites this as the basis for less than significant direct impacts to on-base surface waters (ephemeral washes and playas). This instruction states that the head of the DoD components shall “determine the frequency and degree to which range clearance is required to support operational range safety and sustainable use”. No information is provided regarding the current frequency and degree of range clearance, nor the expected change to this frequency to correspond with greater use of training ranges and deposits of munitions.

*Recommendation:* We understand that reevaluation of the REVA findings will occur every 5 years and that the first reassessment began in October 2010. We recommend that sampling be done to confirm or deny the modeled results of the REVA, and that the susceptibility of additional eco-receptors, including birds, be evaluated.

The FEIS should discuss the current frequency and degree of Operational Range Clearance activities and identify how this would change under the selected alternative. We recommend that DoD commit to a frequency and degree of range clearance commensurate with the increased use of training ranges and munitions, and that this be documented as a special conservation measure in the FEIS.

Drinking Water Wells

Drinking water wells are screened in the Surprise Springs subbasin and provide all potable water to the base. The DEIS does not explicitly identify the location of the wells within this area, but states that the groundwater wells are located in a restricted area of the Combat Center where mechanized maneuvers, OHVs, and training with vehicles are not permitted (p. 3.13-10). It is unclear whether any new proposed training or deposition of munitions could occur in this area as a result of the project alternatives.

*Recommendation:* The FEIS should include an assessment of the impacts of the alternatives on drinking water resources. We recommend that the well-field be assessed for and protected from

NEPA-1

WAT-1

Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 4 of 7):

REC-1:

The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to timing, permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies. Exact timeframes would be determined and communicated to the public if Alternative 4, 5, or 6 is selected. Please see Section 2.5.4 of the EIS for a discussion of the proposed communication and notification procedures in regards to public access to the RPAA.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

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any threats from new sources of pollutants and contamination, including ammunition. A source water protection program addressing any threats to drinking water sources on the base should be developed and implemented.

*Aquatic Resources*

Clean Water Act, Section 404 applicability

Based on Figure 3.13-1 - Surface Water Features, ephemeral drainages are common throughout the entire study area and playas occur in all but the South Study Area. It is not clear whether these ephemeral drainages are jurisdictional waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act. Digging activities associated with staged training operations would create ground disturbances below the normal soil horizon of 12 inches. On average, an estimated 12% of the ground element forces will dig a fighting hole on any given day (p. 1-28). There is also reference to tank traps, trenches and obstacles being filled and graded (p. 4.12-15). If these activities result in dredged or fill material being deposited into waters of the U.S., they would require a 404 permit to be issued by the Army Corps of Engineers (Corps).

WAT-2

*Recommendation:* The Marine Corps should contact the Corps about completing a jurisdictional delineation of aquatic resources in the project study area. Results of this delineation should be included in the FEIS. Any determination that aquatic resources are not jurisdictional should be provided to EPA.

Avoidance of playas and ephemeral washes

The DEIS references a 1994 waters of the U.S. study by the Corps that identified several types of "wet areas" that are of special concern at the Combat Center, including playa lakes, dry washes, seeps and springs, and man-made water bodies (p. 3.13-4). This report identified 11 important playas that are entirely or partially in the Combat Center. The playas maintain intra/inter-ecosystem integrity and were settings for prehistoric cultural activities. Following rain events, when surface waters are present, playas attract wintering waterfowl; when dry, they are often populated by terrestrial birds and mammals where adequate vegetative cover exists.

WAT-3

The DEIS states that impact avoidance is the preferred approach for management of biological resources (p. 4.10-17). It appears that the playas would be largely avoided from high impact areas of training, as shown in Figure 4.10-6. Additional refinement of training impact areas should attempt to further maximize this avoidance. For example, it appears that, for Preferred Alternative 6, the predicted medium disturbance area could be altered to avoid the Dry Lake (Lead Mountain). Alternative 5 would avoid this and other playas to a greater extent than would the Preferred Alternative.

Similarly, ephemeral drainages should also be avoided when possible, as they provide a wide range of functions that are critical to the health and stability of desert ecosystems and wildlife. The project would construct approximately twenty-five to thirty-five miles of new unpaved roads. It is not clear how sophisticated these roads would be, but improper design and maintenance of roads and road crossings can lead to excessive erosion and sediment deposition in ephemeral drainages and receiving water bodies.

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Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 6 of 7):

Finally, the DEIS does not identify the timing of the two 30-day training events and there was no discussion of the practicability of scheduling events to avoid biologically active periods, such as when surface water is present in playas. This is a potentially effective mitigation measure.

*Recommendation:* EPA recommends refining the training routes of the selected alternative to maximize avoidance of important playas. The FEIS should discuss avoidance of ephemeral drainages and ensure proper road design to minimize erosion and sediment deposition in drainages. Discuss the mitigation measure of avoiding biologically active periods when scheduling Marine Expeditionary Brigade exercises.

WAT-3

**Transferred Impacts from Displaced OHV Users**

The Preferred Alternative 6 would acquire the Bureau of Land Management's Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area. It would eliminate recreational access to this area for 2 months of the year during military training exercises, and allow restricted public access to 44% of this area the rest of the year. The Johnson Valley OHV Area is one of the most intensely used OHV areas in California (p. 3.2-17) and the DEIS acknowledges that this action may result in an increase in illegal OHV activity on nearby closed public land, private property, and local and regional wilderness areas as a result of recreationalists being restricted to smaller open spaces (p. 4.2-20). The BLM estimates that 90% of the displaced recreational users would go elsewhere in San Bernardino County, and the quality of the surrounding OHV resources may experience substantial physical deterioration. The Stoddard Valley OHV Area would likely experience the majority of this surge since it is closest, and increased OHV activity in this area may result in increased direct and indirect impacts to desert tortoises since the Stoddard Valley OHV Area has historically had higher tortoise densities than Johnson Valley (p. 4.10-12). Also, residents of nearby Wonder Valley have registered complaints with local authorities about OHV use, and this area is adjacent to a designated wilderness area (p. 4.2-1). The DEIS acknowledges that an increase in illegal riding would likely occur in Wonder Valley and lands adjacent to the south study area (p. 4.2-8).

NEPA-2

Alternative 5 would allow restricted public access to almost the entirety of the Johnson Valley OHV Area when exercises are not occurring (approximately 10 months per year), thus reducing displacement of OHV activity to potentially more sensitive sites for most of the year. It would avoid acquisition of the southern study area, and the DEIS indicates that overall exercise design and direction of maneuver under that alternative would result in lower adverse impacts. Estimated "take" of the federally threatened desert tortoise is lower under Alternative 5, and it is designated as the environmentally preferable alternative.

*Recommendation:* We recommend that the Marine Corps give further consideration to Alternative 5. While we understand that Alternative 5 is less favorable from an operations standpoint, the DEIS indicates that it does meet minimum training requirements and screening criteria.

**Desert Tortoise**

The project will significantly impact the federally threatened desert tortoise. Under the Preferred Alternative, the DEIS estimates that between 154 and 714 would be "taken". Tortoises could be crushed by wheeled or tracked vehicles, or crushed or buried from temporary construction and excavation, temporary bivouacs, helicopter landings, and foot traffic (p. 4.10-10). An estimated 128,386 acres of

BIO-1

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Response to Comment N-18866 (Page 7 of 7):

occupied desert tortoise habitat would experience direct and indirect impacts, including loss of forage, nesting and cover sites, loss of dispersal areas, increased predation, impacts from increases in non-native plant species, inability to dig burrows from soil compaction and ordnance explosions, and stress and resultant dehydration (p. 4.10-11). The DEIS also acknowledges the potentially significant cumulative impacts that this species would experience from multiple solar energy projects in the Mojave Desert. The Marine Corps is requesting an incidental take statement from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

BIO-1

*Recommendation:* The FEIS should provide an update on the Marine Corps's Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the FWS. If the Biological Opinion is available, append it to the FEIS. All terms and conditions from the Biological Opinion should be incorporated into the project Record of Decision. The Marine Corps should commit to implementing any additional conservation measures recommended by the FWS since there is a strong potential for significant cumulative impacts to this species.

**Cultural Resources/ Tribal Consultation**

The DEIS does not provide any information regarding traditional cultural properties; it simply states that the Marine Corps is currently in the process of conducting government-to-government consultation with seven Indian tribes and that no major issues have been identified as of May 2010 (p. 3.11-7).

CR-1

*Recommendation:* The FEIS should provide an update on the tribal consultation process and potential impacts to traditional cultural properties. The consultation process should also be described. Key elements of consultation are direct interaction and an exchange of views.

**Recreational Impacts**

The DEIS proposes 3 special conservation measures to reduce impacts from illegal OHV riding, including educational outreach highlighting law enforcement penalties, signage, and coordination with law enforcement. These measures are listed in the chapter assessing impacts to recreation; however, they seem to address impacts to other resources from illegal OHV activity and do not address the loss of recreational sites. Input from the public during the scoping period included a suggestion to explore the release of other DoD or BLM-administered public land not currently open to recreation. The DEIS states that this would be analyzed as part of the impact assessment and mitigation development (p. 2-99), but this analysis was not found. Instead, the DEIS simply states that the Marine Corps considered potential mitigation measures but determined none were feasible so none are recommended for the significant impacts to recreation.

REC-1

The DEIS does not discuss the timing of when the 2 month-long training exercises and closure of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would occur. A potential mitigation measure would be to time the closures to correspond with times of minimal recreational user demand, consistent with Marine Corps training needs and avoidance of impacts to other resources.

*Recommendation:* In the FEIS, discuss the possibility of releasing other public land for recreation if the preferred alternative is selected. If this was considered but deemed infeasible, the FEIS should discuss this in more detail, especially since it is identified as within the scope of the EIS (p. 2-98). Explore timing/scheduling of OHV Area closures as mitigation.

Comment ID: N-18867 (Page 1 of 3)

Comment ID: N-18867  
Date Received: May 31, 2011



3550 Foothill Boulevard  
Glendale, California 91214-1868

May 20, 2011

Via US Postal Service Priority Mail  
Article Number:  
420922789101128882300706124078

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
Proposed 29 Palms Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Project  
MAGTFTC, MCAGCC  
Bldg. 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Re: Request for Extension of Time to Comment - Draft  
Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and  
Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale MAGTF Live-  
Fire and Maneuver Training at the Marine Corps Air Ground  
Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California.

Mr. Proudfoot:

The purpose of this letter is to make a formal request for  
and extension of time to provide comments to the  
aforementioned document.

The rationale for this request is several-fold:

1. The DEIS and its appendix are a complex and lengthy  
document. Given the USMC has had nearly two years to  
compile this document and has only given the public 90 days  
to provide comment, it is our belief that it would be in

Page 1 of 3

Response to Comment N-18867 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Comment ID: N-18867 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment N-18867 (Page 2 of 3):

Mr. Chris Proudfoot – USMC 29 Falls – Request for Extension of Time to Comment – DEIS  
5/20/2011

the public interest to allow for additional time to provide such comment.

2. Only recently, we discovered that the *Federal Register*<sup>1</sup> Notice of Availability of this Statement provides that the public comment period ended April 11, 2011. The said Notice is in conflict with Press-Release No: PR-110224NH1 as it provides for the comment period ending May 26, 2011.

Since indeed the *Federal Register* Notice is the only legal Notice of the USMC's intent of this document, the public is now confused and may have not submitted comments after this April due date.

3. The issue cited in number two, above, is now compounded by fact that the USMC has submitted to the *Federal Register*<sup>2</sup> the following Notice:

EIS No. 20110051, Draft EIS, USN, CA, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Project, Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale MAGTY Live-Fire and Maneuver Training Facility, San Bernardino County, CA, Comment Period Ends: 05/26/2011, Contact: Chris Proudfoot 760-830-3754.

Revision of ER Notice Published 02/24/2011: Extending Comment Period From 04/11/2011 to 05/26/2011.

Of particular concern to the undersigned is the provision of "Extending Comment Period". It is our assertion that the USMC has published this later Notice as a correction rather than an extension.

Moreover, as of the writing of this letter, the USMC web site for the expansion does not include the Revision Notice, nor a press release, of the revised Notice published in the Federal Register on Friday, May 13, 2011.

In light of the issues cited above, the undersigned request an extension of sixty (60) calendar days for the public to submit its comments to this document. Again, we believe this is in the public interest considering the gravity of the issues cited above and the implications of the project on public lands and related access to the same.

<sup>1</sup> See page 11216 *Federal Register* / Vol. 76, No. 40 / Tuesday, March 1, 2011

<sup>2</sup> See page 28029, *Federal Register* Volume 76 / Number 93 / Friday, May 13, 2011

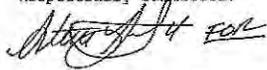
**Comment ID: N-18867 (Page 3 of 3)**

**Response to Comment N-18867 (Page 3 of 3):**

Mr. Chris Proudfoot – USMC 29 Palms – Request for Extension of Time to Comment – DEIS  
5/20/2011

Please contact Harry Baker via telephone at: (818) 370-3582  
- with your decision.

Respectfully submitted:



Harry Baker – Chairman: Partnership for Johnson Valley  
Jerry Grabow – President: District 37 American Motorcyclist  
Association  
Jim Woods – President: California Off-Road Vehicle  
Association (“CORVA”)  
Mark Cave – President: California Association of Four Wheel  
Drive Clubs  
Ed Waldheim – President: California Trail Users Coalition

## Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS

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### Comment ID: N-18868 (Page 1 of 1)

Comment ID: N-18868  
Date Received: January 11, 2012

12983 Haverford Ct  
Victorville CA. 92392

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132

Dear sir:

You must provide an additional 90 days for review of the Draft EIS for the 29 Palms expansion project. There is much "good cause" for the reason that you need to provide this additional time:

- 1) The project is extremely large and very complex;
- 2) The EIS is voluminous at 2,000 pages;
- 3) Formal public hearings on the project have not been provided;
- 4) The April open house meetings did not afford the public to hear other people's comments in an official public forum;
- 5) Printed copies of the EIS were only distributed to local libraries despite me asking for one in my scoping letter;
- 6) You are requiring most publics to read the 2,000 pages of complex material on-line via your project website;
- 7) To digest the entire document, a person would have to read over 20 pages of complex material daily for the entire 90 days that you provided. That is not an acceptable expectation for the working public with many other commitments for their time.
- 8) You have worked on this EIS for 5 years. You must provide the public with at least six months to review it.

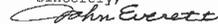
You must extend the public comment period for an additional 90 days.

You must schedule some public hearings where our comments can be heard by all, including elected officials, and properly recorded.

Then, because of the many problems in your first draft EIS, you must issue a second draft for review. The first draft is not adequate.

An additional 30-60 days public comment period with hearings should follow the issuance of your second draft EIS.

Thank you.

Sincerely,  
  
John Everett

### Response to Comment N-18868 (Page 1 of 1):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

**Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 1 of 10)**

**Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 1 of 10):**

Comment ID: N-18869  
Date Received: January 11, 2012

May 20, 2011  
P.O. Box 879  
Newbury Park, CA 91319

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

2011 OCT 17 PM 3 30

Dear sirs:

Subject: Comments on the Draft EIS for 29 Palms

AIR QUALITY

You have been remiss in not addressing all of the state and national ambient air quality standards that are applicable in California. Your EIS must be revised to fully analyze:

State and National Ambient Air Quality Standards Applicable In California Pollutant	Averaging Time	Standards In	Standards In	Standards In	Standards In	Violation	Violation
		Parts Per Million by Volume (ppm) California	Parts Per Million by Volume (ppm) National	Micrograms Per Cubic Meter (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) California	Micrograms Per Cubic Meter (µg/m <sup>3</sup> ) National	Criteria California	Criteria National
Ozone	1 Hour	0.09	Standard rescinded	180	Standard rescinded	If exceeded	Not applicable
Ozone	8 Hours	0.070	0.075	137	147	If exceeded	If exceeded by the mean of annual 4th highest daily values for a 3-year period
Carbon Monoxide	1 Hour	20	35	23,000	40,000	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Carbon Monoxide	8 Hours	9.0	9	10,000	10,000	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Carbon Monoxide	8 Hours (Lake Tahoe Basin only)	6.0	9	7,000	10,000	If equalled or exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Nitrogen Dioxide	Annual Average	0.030	0.053	57	100	If exceeded	If exceeded
Nitrogen Dioxide	1 Hour	0.18	0.100	339	188	If exceeded	If exceeded by the mean of annual 98th percentile values over 3 years
Sulfur Dioxide	Annual Average	No standard	0.030	No standard	80	Not applicable	If exceeded

This letter is a duplicate to comment letter N-18729. Please see Comment N-18729 for response to the comment.

Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 2 of 10)

Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 2 of 10):

Sulfur Dioxide	24 Hours	0.04	0.14	105	365	If exceeded	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Sulfur Dioxide	3 Hours	No standard	0.5	No standard	1,300	Not applicable	If exceeded on more than 1 day per year
Sulfur Dioxide	1 Hour	0.25	No standard	655	Not applicable	If exceeded	Not applicable
Inhalable Particulate Matter (PM10)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	Not applicable	Not applicable	20	Standard rescinded	If exceeded	Not applicable
Inhalable Particulate Matter (PM10)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	50	150	If exceeded	For 1997 non-attainment areas, if exceeded on more than 1 day per year. For other areas, if exceeded by the mean of annual 99th percentile values over 3 years
Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	Annual Arithmetic Mean	Not applicable	Not applicable	12	15.0	If exceeded	If exceeded as a 3-year spatial average of data from designated stations
Fine Particulate Matter (PM2.5)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	35	Not applicable	If exceeded by the mean of annual 98th percentile values over 3 years
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	Calendar Quarter	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	1.5	Not applicable	If exceeded
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	Rolling 3-Month Average	Not applicable	Not applicable	No standard	0.15	Not applicable	If exceeded during a 3-year period
Lead Particles (TSP sampler)	30 Days	Not applicable	Not applicable	1.5	No standard	If exceeded	Not applicable
Sulfate Particles (TSP sampler)	24 Hours	Not applicable	Not applicable	25	No standard	If equalled or exceeded	Not applicable
Hydrogen Sulfide	1 Hour	0.03	No standard	42	No standard	If exceeded	Not applicable
Vinyl Chloride	24 Hours	0.01	No standard	26	No standard	If equalled or exceeded	Not applicable

Notes:

All standards except the national PM10 and PM2.5 standards are based on measurements corrected to 25 degrees C and 1 atmosphere pressure.

The national PM10 and PM2.5 standards are based on direct flow volume data without correction to standard temperature and pressure.

### Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 3 of 10)

### Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 3 of 10):

Decimal places shown for standard reflect the rounding or truncating conventions used for evaluating compliance.

The "10" in PM10 and the "2.5" in PM2.5 are not particle size limits; these numbers identify the particle size class (aerodynamic diameter in microns) collected with 50% mass efficiency by certified sampling equipment. The maximum particle size collected by PM10 samplers is about 50 microns. The maximum particle size collected by PM2.5 samplers is about 6 microns.

Data Sources: 40 CFR Parts 50, 53, and 58; CARB (2010a); EPA (2010b).

In California, air quality regulation is a joint responsibility between CARB and local air quality management agencies. Local agencies are either a single county or a multi-county agency, typically called an Air Pollution Control District (APCD) or an Air Quality Management District (AQMD). APCDs and AQMDs have primary responsibility for most air quality regulatory programs, with CARB retaining oversight responsibilities. CARB directly implements statewide regulatory programs for motor vehicles, portable equipment, and hazardous air pollutants. The project area is under the jurisdiction of the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD).

**You must identify if the MDAQMD has adopted other regulations that affect facility construction and operation.** Training activities would be subject to fugitive dust control requirements that prohibit creation of dust plumes that are visible beyond the property line of the emission source, and requires all "active operations" (construction/demolition activities, earthmoving activities, heavy or light duty vehicle movements, or creation of disturbed surface areas) to implement applicable best available control measures as defined by MDAQMD. You must summarize all best available dust control measures outlined in MDAQMD rules as general dust control measures. Enhanced dust control requirements would apply since the training is considered large operations. A large operation could be any active operations on property which contains 50 or more acres of disturbed surface area, or any earthmoving operation with a daily throughput volume of 5,000 cubic yards or more three or more times during the most recent 365-day period.

**You have not fully addressed Clean Air Act conformity.** Section 176(c) of the CAA requires federal agencies to ensure that actions undertaken in nonattainment or maintenance areas are consistent with the CAA and with federally enforceable air quality management plans. EPA has promulgated separate rules that establish conformity analysis procedures for highway/mass-transit projects (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart A) and for other (general) federal agency actions (40 CFR Part 93, Subpart B). General conformity requirements are potentially applicable to many federal agency actions, but apply only to those aspects of an action that involve on-going federal agency responsibility and control over direct or indirect sources of air pollutant emissions.

The EPA conformity rule establishes a process that is intended to demonstrate that the proposed federal action:

- Would not cause or contribute to new violations of federal air quality standards;
- Would not increase the frequency or severity of existing violations of federal air quality standards; and
- Would not delay the timely attainment of federal air quality standards.

The EPA general conformity rule applies to federal actions occurring in nonattainment or maintenance areas when the total direct and indirect emissions of nonattainment pollutants (or their precursors) exceed specified thresholds. The emission thresholds that trigger requirements of the conformity rule are called de minimis levels. Emissions associated with stationary sources that are subject to permit programs incorporated into the SIP are not counted against the de minimis threshold.

In the DEIS, compliance with the conformity rule can be demonstrated in several ways. Compliance is presumed if the net increase in direct and indirect emissions from a federal action would be less than the relevant de minimis level. If net emissions increases exceed the relevant de minimis value, a formal conformity determination process must be followed. Federal agency actions subject to the general conformity rule cannot proceed until there is a demonstration of consistency with the SIP. **Your DEIS is currently inadequate in this regard.**

#### **NOISE**

**Your EIS has not adequately addressed:**

Noise Descriptors  
Decibel Scales  
Decibel Values  
Applicability with Plans, Policies and Regulations  
Federal Criteria and Standards

State Criteria and Standards  
Local Criteria and Standards (specifically San Bernardino County)  
Vibration

Noise is defined as unwanted or extraneous sound. Sound is caused by vibrations that generate waves of minute air pressure fluctuations. Air pressure fluctuations that occur from 20 to 20,000 times per second can be detected as audible sound. The number of pressure fluctuations per second is normally reported as cycles per second or Hertz (Hz). Different vibration frequencies produce different tonal qualities for the resulting sound. In general, sound waves travel away from the noise source as an expanding spherical surface. The energy contained in a sound wave is consequently spread over an increasing area as it travels away from the source. This results in a decrease in loudness at greater distances from the noise source.

*Decibel Scales*

Human hearing varies in sensitivity for different sound frequencies. The ear is most sensitive to sound frequencies between 800 and 8,000 Hz, less sensitive to higher and lower sound frequencies, and least sensitive to sound frequencies below 250 Hz. Peak sensitivity to pure tones typically occurs at frequencies between 2,000 Hz and 6,000 Hz. Relative sensitivity remains fairly high between about 250 Hz and 2,000 Hz. Relative sensitivity drops off slightly above 7,000 Hz, and drops off significantly below 200 Hz. In addition, relative sensitivity to different acoustic frequencies also varies with the intensity of the sound. Several different frequency weighting schemes have been developed, using different decibel (dB) adjustment values for each octave or 1/3 octave interval. Some of these weighting schemes are intended to approximate the way the human ear responds to noise levels; others are designed to account for the response of building materials to airborne vibrations and sound. The most commonly used decibel weighting schemes are the A-weighted and C-weighted scales.

The "A-weighted" decibel scale (dBA) is normally used to approximate human hearing response to sound. The A-weighted scale significantly reduces the measured pressure level for low frequency sounds while slightly increasing the measured pressure level for some middle frequency sounds. The "C-weighted" decibel scale (dBC) is often used to characterize low frequency sounds capable of inducing vibrations in buildings or other structures. The C-weighted scale makes only minor reductions to the measured pressure level for low frequency components of a sound while making slightly greater reductions to high frequency components than does the A-weighted scale.

*Common Noise Descriptors*

Varying noise levels are often described in terms of the equivalent constant decibel level. Equivalent noise levels (Leq) are used to develop single-value descriptions of average noise exposure over various periods. Such average noise exposure ratings often include additional weighting factors for annoyance potential due to time of day or other considerations. The Leq data used for these average noise exposure descriptors are generally based on A-weighted sound level measurements, although other weighting systems are used for special conditions (such as blasting noise).

Average noise exposure over a 24-hour period is often presented as a day-night average sound level (Ldn) or a community noise equivalent level (CNEL). Ldn values are calculated from hourly Leq values, with the Leq values for the nighttime period (10:00 PM to 7:00 AM) increased by 10 dB to reflect the greater disturbance potential from nighttime noises. CNEL values are very similar to Ldn values, but include a 5 dB annoyance adjustment for evening (7:00 PM to 10:00 PM) Leq values in addition to the 10 dB adjustment for nighttime Leq values. Except in unusual situations, the CNEL descriptor will be within 1.5 dB of the Ldn descriptor for the same set of noise measurements. Unless specifically noted otherwise, Ldn and CNEL values are assumed to be based on dBA measurements.

*Working with Decibel Values*

The nature of dB scales is such that individual dB ratings for different noise sources cannot be added directly to give the dB rating of the combination of these sources. Two noise sources producing equal dB ratings at a given location will produce a composite noise level 3 dB greater than either sound alone. When two noise sources differ by 10 dB, the composite noise level will be only 0.4 dB greater than the louder source alone. Most people have difficulty distinguishing the louder of two noise sources that differ by less than 1.5 to 2 dB. In general, a 10 dB increase in noise level is perceived as a doubling in loudness. A 2 dB increase represents a 15 percent increase in loudness, a 3 dB increase is a 23 percent increase in loudness, and a 5 dB increase is a 41 percent increase in loudness.

### Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 5 of 10)

### Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 5 of 10):

When distance is the only factor considered, sound levels from an isolated noise source will typically decrease by about 6 dB for every doubling of distance away from the noise source. When the noise source is essentially a continuous line (e.g., vehicle traffic on a highway), noise levels decrease by about 3 dB for every doubling of distance.

#### *Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations*

Various federal, state, and local agencies have developed guidelines for evaluating land use compatibility under different noise level ranges. The federal Noise Control Act of 1972 (Public Law 92-574) established a requirement that all federal agencies must administer their programs in a manner that promotes an environment free from noise that jeopardizes public health or welfare. The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was given the responsibility for: providing information to the public regarding identifiable effects of noise on public health or welfare, publishing information on the levels of environmental noise that will protect the public health and welfare with an adequate margin of safety, coordinating federal research and activities related to noise control, and establishing federal noise emission standards for selected products distributed in interstate commerce. The federal Noise Control Act also directed all federal agencies to comply with applicable federal, state, interstate, and local noise control regulations to the same extent that any person is subject to such requirements.

Although EPA was given major public information and federal agency coordination roles, each federal agency retains authority to adopt noise regulations pertaining to agency programs. EPA can require other federal agencies to justify their noise regulations in terms of the federal Noise Control Act policy requirements, but has no authority to approve or disapprove the noise regulations and policies of other federal agencies. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has primary authority for setting workplace noise exposure standards. Due to aviation safety considerations, the Federal Aviation Administration has primary jurisdiction over aircraft noise standards.

#### *Federal Criteria and Standards*

In response to the requirements of the federal Noise Control Act, EPA (1974) has identified indoor and outdoor noise limits to protect public health and welfare (hearing damage, sleep disturbance, and communication disruption). Outdoor Ldn values of 55 dB and indoor Ldn values of 45 dB are identified as desirable to protect against speech interference and sleep disturbance for residential, educational, and health care areas. Noise level criteria to protect against hearing damage in commercial and industrial areas are identified as 24-hour Leq values of 70 dB (both outdoors and indoors).

In 1980 the Federal Interagency Committee on Urban Noise (FICUN) developed guidelines to evaluate whether existing and proposed land uses are compatible with prevailing noise levels. The primary federal agencies participating in the FICUN report included EPA, the Department of Defense, the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Department of Transportation, and the Veterans Administration. The FICUN guidelines address land use compatibility and recommend building design considerations according to three noise level categories:

Zone 1 = Ldn or CNEL levels below 65 dB;  
Zone 2 = Ldn or CNEL levels of 65 to 75 dB; and  
Zone 3 = Ldn or CNEL levels above 75 dB.

The FICUN guidelines indicate that all land uses are compatible with Zone 1 noise levels. Educational and residential land uses generally are not compatible with Zone 2 noise levels unless special acoustic treatments and designs are used to ensure acceptable interior noise levels. Residential and educational land uses are not compatible with Zone 3 noise levels. Industrial and manufacturing land uses may be acceptable in Zone 3 areas if special building designs and other measures are implemented.

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) has adopted criteria for evaluating noise impacts associated with federally funded highway projects and for determining whether these impacts are sufficient to justify funding noise mitigation actions (47 FR 131:29653-29656). FHWA noise abatement criteria are based on peak hour Leq noise levels, not Ldn or 24-hour Leq values. The peak 1-hour Leq criteria for residential, educational, and health care facilities are 67 dB outdoors and 52 dB indoors. The peak 1-hour Leq criterion for commercial and industrial areas is 72 dB (outdoors).

The relationship between peak hour Leq values and associated Ldn values depends on the distribution of traffic over the entire day. There is no precise way to convert a peak hour Leq value to an Ldn value. In urban areas with heavy traffic, the peak hour Leq value is typically 2 to 4 dB lower than the daily Ldn value. In less heavily developed areas, the peak hour Leq is often equal to the daily Ldn value. For rural areas with little nighttime traffic, the peak hour Leq value will often be 3 to 4 dB greater than the daily Ldn value.

**Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 6 of 10)**

**Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 6 of 10):**

HUD has established guidelines for evaluating noise impacts on residential projects seeking financial support under various grant programs (44 FR 135:40860-40866). Sites are generally considered acceptable for residential use if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values of 65 dB or less. Sites are considered "normally unacceptable" if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values of 65 to 75 dB. Sites are considered unacceptable if they are exposed to outdoor Ldn values above 75 dB.

*State Criteria and Standards*

The California Governor's Office of Planning and Research (2003) has published guidelines for the noise element of local general plans. These guidelines include a noise level/land use compatibility chart that categorizes outdoor CNEL/Ldn levels into as many as four compatibility categories (normally acceptable, conditionally acceptable, normally unacceptable, and clearly unacceptable), depending on land use. For many land uses, the chart shows overlapping CNEL/Ldn ranges for two or more compatibility categories.

The noise element guidelines chart identifies the normally acceptable range for low density residential uses as CNEL/Ldn values less than 60 dB, while the conditionally acceptable range is 55 to 70 dB. The normally acceptable range for high density residential uses is identified as CNEL/Ldn values below 65 dB, while the conditionally acceptable range is identified as 60 to 70 dB. For educational and medical facilities, CNEL/Ldn values below 70 dB are considered normally acceptable, while values of 60 to 70 dB are considered conditionally acceptable. For office and commercial land uses, CNEL/Ldn values below 70 dB are considered normally acceptable, while values of 67.5 to 77.5 dB are categorized as conditionally acceptable. The overlapping CNEL/Ldn ranges are intended to indicate that local conditions (existing noise levels and community attitudes toward dominant noise sources) should be considered in evaluating land use compatibility at specific locations.

*Local Criteria and Standards*

Cities and counties in California are required to adopt a noise element as part of their general plans. Many cities and counties have incorporated the California Department of Health Services land use compatibility guidelines as a key item in the general plan noise element, while other cities and counties have developed their own land use compatibility guidelines. In addition to local general plan noise elements, some cities and counties have adopted noise ordinances to legally define noise nuisances. Local noise ordinances vary considerably in their format and coverage. Many noise ordinances establish property line performance standards for different land use or zoning categories. There is considerable variation among communities as to the types of noise sources covered under local noise ordinances.

**The DEIS must say if there is a noise element of the San Bernardino County General Plan that identifies noise-sensitive land uses for: ?**

Residential uses,  
Schools,  
Hospitals,  
Rest homes,  
Long-term care facilities,  
Mental care facilities,  
Libraries,  
Places of worship, and  
Passive recreation uses.

**Your EIS must identify if San Bernardino County has adopted land use compatibility criteria as part of the noise element of the County Land Use Plan.**

In Riverside County, for example, the noise element of the County General Plan includes numerous policies intended to minimize noise-related conflicts between adjacent types of land uses. These policies include the following:

- Discourage noise-sensitive land uses from being located in areas exposed to CNEL levels above 65 dBA;
- Guide noise-tolerant land uses into areas committed to land uses that are noise-producing, such as transportation corridors or areas adjacent to airports;

Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 7 of 10)

Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 7 of 10):

- Discourage projects that cannot successfully mitigate excessive noise;
- Require commercial or industrial truck delivery hours to be limited when next to noise-sensitive land uses unless there is no feasible alternative or there are overriding transportation benefits;
- New land use development within Airport Influence Areas should comply with airport land use noise compatibility criteria contained in the applicable airport land use compatibility plan;
- Require development that generates increased traffic and subsequent increases in ambient noise level adjacent to noise-sensitive land uses to provide for appropriate mitigation measures;
- Ensure that construction activities are regulated to establish hours of operation in order to prevent or mitigate the generation of excessive or adverse noise impacts on surrounding areas;
- Require that all construction equipment utilize noise reduction features (such as mufflers and engine shrouds) that are no less effective than those originally installed by the manufacturer; and
- Consider the issue of adjacent residential land uses when designing and configuring all new non-residential development. Design and configure on-site ingress and egress points to divert traffic away from nearby noise-sensitive land uses to the greatest degree practicable.

The DEIS must also identify if the noise element of the San Bernardino County General Plan also identifies preferred noise standards for stationary noise sources that affect residential land uses.

Again as an example, Riverside County has adopted a noise ordinance (Ordinance 847) to regulate noise sources on one property that may impact adjacent properties. The noise ordinance sets general noise standards according to the land use designation of the affected property. Table 3.10-4 summarizes the basic noise standards in Riverside County Ordinance 847. The Riverside County noise ordinance also includes special provisions related to sound amplification systems, live music, audio equipment, and power tools. The noise ordinance also provides for exceptions from the general and special noise standard provisions.

**Vibration**

The DEIS does not adequately analyze the impacts of vibration.

Ground-borne vibrations can be a source of annoyance to people or a source of structural damage to some types of buildings. Although vibration measurements can be presented in many different forms, peak particle velocity (PPV) is the unit of measure used most often to assess building damage potential. The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has identified vibration impact criteria for both building damage potential and human annoyance (Caltrans 2002, 2004). These references are listed below. Both human annoyance effects and building damage effects depend in part on whether vibration events are isolated, discrete events or a relatively continuous episode of vibrations. In general, there is less sensitivity to single, discrete events than to continuous events or frequently repeated discrete events.

You must utilize the following references for adequate analysis:

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2002. Transportation Related Earthborne Vibrations. Technical Advisory TAV-02-01-R9601. Sacramento, CA. Internet Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/evn/noise/publications.htm>. Accessed on March 04, 2008.

Caltrans (California Department of Transportation). 2004. Transportation- and Construction-Induced Ground Vibration Guidance Manual. Prepared by Jorles & Stokes. Sacramento, CA. Internet Web site: <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/evn/noise>. Accessed on March 04, 2008.

The EIS must summarize Caltrans criteria for assessing the effects of ground-borne vibration. Type of criteria can be either human response OR building damage. Threshold conditions pertain to the perceptibility for human response, or it can involve varying levels of cosmetic damage for building damage. The DEIS must analyze the peak particle velocity in inches/second to determine if vibration thresholds will be exceeded, especially as a result of transient and/or continuous/frequent sources in all areas and airspace proposed for possible acquisition by the U.S. Marine Corps.

Comment ID: N-18869 (Page 8 of 10)

Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 8 of 10):

The DEIS must also include consideration of ground-borne vibrations. The following land uses are typically identified by the noise element in a County land use plan as being vibration sensitive:

- Hospitals,
- Residential areas,
- Concert halls,
- Libraries,
- Sensitive research operations,
- Schools, and
- Offices.

The DEIS must consider noise and vibration mitigation to vibration include the following:

- Restrict the placement of sensitive land uses in proximity to vibration-producing land uses, and
- Prohibit the exposure of residential dwellings to ground vibration from passing trains that would be perceptible on the ground or second floors (vibrations are presumed to be perceptible if they exceed a peak particle velocity of 0.01 inch per second over a range of 1 to 100 Hz).

GEOLOGY AND EARTHQUAKE HAZARD

The DEIS is not adequate in its recognition and analysis of compliance with the following application State of California laws:

*Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act*

The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act of 1972 regulates development and construction of buildings intended for human occupancy to avoid the hazard of surface fault rupture. This act provides mitigation against surface fault rupture of known active faults beneath occupied structures, and requires disclosure of the presence of any seismic faults to potential real estate buyers and a 50-foot setback for new occupied buildings. The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act helps define where fault rupture is most likely to occur. This act groups faults into categories of active, potentially active, and inactive. This information must be disclosed in the EIS.

*Seismic Hazards Mapping Act*

The Seismic Hazards Mapping Act of 1990 directs the California Geological Survey to delineate seismic hazard zones. The purpose of this act is to reduce the threat to public health and safety, and to minimize the loss of life and property by identifying and mitigating seismic hazards. These seismic hazards include areas that are subject to the effects of strong ground shaking such as liquefaction, landslides, tsunamis and seiches. Cities, counties, and state agencies are directed to use seismic hazard zone maps developed by the California Geological Survey in their land use planning and permitting processes. This act requires that site-specific geotechnical investigations. Those must be undertaken before any land acquisition can proceed. This information must be disclosed in the EIS.

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Paleontological resources constitute a fragile and nonrenewable scientific record of the history of life on earth. The BLM policy is to manage paleontological resources for scientific, educational, and recreational values and to protect these resources from adverse impacts. To accomplish this goal, the USMC and your cooperating agency (BLM) must ensure that proposed land uses that it initiates or authorizes do not inadvertently damage or destroy important paleontological resources on public lands.

To ensure the protection of paleontological resources, the USMC considers paleontological data as early as possible in the decision-making process for any project. As part of this ongoing consideration, the USMC and BLM must collate existing information on paleontological resources and uses this information to classify the geologic formations present for their potential to contain vertebrate fossils or invertebrate or plant fossils that are scientifically important. The EIS must include this information.

Applicable Plans, Policies, and Regulations

The major laws protecting paleontological resources on federal lands include the Paleontological Resources Preservation Act (PRPA) which was signed into law as part of the Omnibus Public Lands Management Act (OPLA) of 2009. The PRPA requires the Secretary

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Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 9 of 10):

of the Interior to manage and protect paleontological resources on federal land using scientific principles and expertise, and requires the USMC to develop appropriate plans for inventorying, monitoring, and the scientific and educational use of paleontological resources, in accordance with applicable agency laws, regulations, and policies. Where possible, these plans should emphasize interagency coordination and collaborative efforts with non-federal partners, the scientific community, and the general public.

Other major authorities protecting paleontological resources on federal lands are the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), NEPA, and various sections of regulations.

While paleontological resources are often discussed in parallel to or linked with historical and cultural resources in planning and environmental impact analyses, the identification and classification of paleontological resources is based on geologic units. BLM is a cooperater on your EIS. Therefore, you should use their system for analyzing impacts on paleontological resources. On October 15, 2007, the BLM formalized the use of a new classification system for identifying fossil potential on public lands with the release of instruction memorandum IM 2008-009. The Potential Fossil Yield Classification (PFYC) system is based on the potential for the occurrence of significant paleontological resources in a geologic unit, and the associated risk for impacts to the resource based on federal management actions. Occurrences of paleontological resources are closely tied to the geologic units (i.e., formations, members, or beds) that contain them.

Using the PFYC system, geologic units are classified (Class 1 – Very Low through Class 5 – Very High) based on the relative abundance of vertebrate fossils or scientifically significant invertebrate or plant fossils and their sensitivity to adverse impacts, with a higher class number indicating a higher potential. It is used to set management policies and not intended to be applied to specific paleontological localities or small areas within units.

While they are being updated to reflect the requirements of the PRPA and the PFYC system, the BLM Manual 8270 and BLM Handbook H-8270-1 contain the agency's guidance for managing paleontological resources on public land. The manual has more information on the authorities and regulations related to paleontological resources. The handbook gives procedures for permit issuance, requirements for qualified applicants, information on paleontology and planning, and a classification system for potential fossil-bearing geologic formations on public lands.

Your DEIS is currently not adequate in its analysis on paleontological resources.

**PUBLIC HEALTH, SAFETY, TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS**

*Oil Pollution Prevention (40 CFR Part 112)*

The goal of the oil pollution prevention regulation in 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 112 is to prevent oil discharges from reaching navigable waters of the United States or adjoining shorelines. Facilities that could reasonably be expected to discharge oil into navigable waters in quantities that may be harmful are required to develop and implement Spill Prevention, Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) plans per the SPCC rule.

*Occupational Safety and Health Administration*

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) administers health standards that (1) provide regulations for safety in the workplace, (2) regulate construction safety, and (3) require a Hazards Communication Plan. The plan includes identification and inventory of all hazardous materials for which Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) would be maintained, and employee training in safe handling of said materials.

*Federal Aviation Administration Regulations (14 CFR 77)*

Title 14 CFR Section 77 contains standards for determining physical obstructions to navigable airspace. Form 7460-1, Notice of Proposed Construction or Alteration, must be filed with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) if an object to be constructed has the potential to affect navigable airspace according to these standards.

*Federal Transportation Regulations (49 CFR, Subtitle B)*

Title 49 CFR, Subtitle B, contains procedures and regulations pertaining to interstate and intrastate transport, including hazardous materials program procedures, and

*State of California*

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Response to Comment N-18869 (Page 10 of 10):

*California Environmental Protection Agency*

The California Environmental Protection Agency (Cal EPA) unifies California's environmental authority, consolidating the California Air Resources Board (CARB), State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), Integrated Waste Management Board (IWMB), the DTSC, Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA), and the Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) under one agency. The California Hazardous Waste Control Law is administered by Cal EPA's DTSC.

*Department of Toxic Substance Control*

The DTSC is the primary agency in California that regulates hazardous waste, administers clean-ups of existing contamination and looks for ways to reduce hazardous waste produced in California. The DTSC regulates hazardous waste in California primarily under the authority of RCRA and the California Health and Safety Code. The DTSC manages, maintains and monitors the Cortese list of hazardous waste sites. The Cortese list, or Hazardous Waste and Substances Sites List, is a planning resource used by the state, local agencies, and developers to comply with CEQA requirements in providing information about the location of hazardous materials release sites.

*California Emergency Management Agency*

The California Emergency Management Agency (Cal/EMA) was formed January 1, 2009 as a result of a merger between the Governor's Office of Emergency Services (OES) and the Office of Homeland Security. The Hazardous Materials Unit of the Cal/EMA is responsible for HAZMAT emergency planning and response, spill release notifications, and HAZMAT enforcement of the Unified Program. The OES provides emergency response services in support of local jurisdictions.

*California Public Utilities Commission*

You must state and analyze whether you would use the CPUC General Order 95 and 165, as related to fire-safe design and maintenance practices for transmission lines, to establish minimum requirements for the Project regarding inspection (including maximum allowable inspection cycle lengths), condition rating, scheduling and performance of corrective action, record keeping and reporting, in order to ensure a safe and high-quality electrical service.

*California Vehicle Code*

The California Vehicle Code contains regulations applicable to roadway damage; licensing, size, weight, and load of vehicles operated on highways; safe operation of vehicles; and the transportation of hazardous materials.

*San Bernardino County*

The DEIS has not adequately addressed all applicable plans, policies and regulation of the:

County of San Bernardino Department of Environmental Health

County of San Bernardino Fire Department

All Other Applicable San Bernardino County Departments

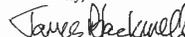
**OTHER COMMENTS**

Please include a glossary in the EIS.

Due to the volume and complexity of this project and EIS, please extend the comment period for an additional 90 days.

Please schedule formal public hearings on this proposal.

Sincerely,

  
James Blackwell

**Comment ID** 44

**Last Name** Holloway

**First Name** Jack

**Comment** The southern boundary of the proposed base is only 300-500 feet north from many of my families cabins that are occupied several times per year and my uncle's home at the northern most portion of Ranch Road, just west of Ranch Road. We have owned these cabins and homes for 55 years and would hope you would consider the safety implications of your proposed boundary so close to our homes/cabins. I would propose moving the boundary further north at least 1-2 miles from the northern most cabin off of Ranch Road. It appears to be a simple and miniscule adjustment that would make all happy and lessen the impact to those of us that frquent the cabins with our children and families. Thank you for the input. Jack Holloway

**Date Comment Received** 2/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS has considered impacts to adjacent land uses in the selection of boundary alignment. As indicated in Section 2.3.1, for an alternative to be feasible it needs to provide for at least 3,280 feet (1,000 meters) of buffer area between live-fire areas (including SDZs and WDZs) and any proposed or existing installation boundary in accordance with the established Combat Center safety policy (Combat Center Order P3500.4h)

**Comment ID** 45

**Last Name** Chatterton

**First Name** Deanne

**Comment** I have concern for the increased bombing effects on private water well systems. You didn't address any studies on this.

**Date Comment Received** 2/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The potential for munitions constituents (MC) to affect the quality of surface and groundwaters are evaluated in Section 4.13 and determined to be less than significant. The Combat Center has a water quality monitoring plan (2009) that evaluated the risks to the wells and an on-going water quality monitoring program. The water quality monitoring program adequately addresses the protection of the water supply drinking wells and has determined there to be no impacts.

**Comment ID** 46

**Last Name** chun

**First Name** john

**Comment** I support the Military. I want to sell my Land at \$10,000 per acre to the US Marines!

**Date Comment Received** 2/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 47

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family uses the Johnson Valley OHV area. As you know, public land for OHV use is being reduced at an alarming rate. At the same time I understand the need to provide a suitable training facility for our troops. Perhaps there could be a compromise such as another nearby area for us to recreate. Thanks for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 2/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the trend in availability of OHV land. The EIS documents both in Sections 3.2, 4.2, and 5.2 of the EIS. The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, several alternative scenarios for implementation of the proposed action were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 55

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I completely disagree with the US Marines' land grab of the Johnson Valley OHV area. The OHV area has been the Marines target all along and the so called "goodwill boundry re-assessment" still encroaches on the original boundary, but according to the Marines propaganda, they're do-gooders for returning (part) of the lands??? Pleeze! Their arrogance suggests the land is already theirs and the shell game is an instult to all US citizens. Shame on you Marines. I respect your needs for additional training grounds, but you must respect the publics needs as well by putting forth a REASONABLE alternative. God bless the USA!

**Date Comment Received** 3/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, several alternative scenarios for implementation of the proposed action were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 56

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I cannot make out any of the maps or legends as they appear too small on the screen, so there is little information here that is accessible to me. I believe you plan to fly over residential areas. I strongly object to your making the peaceful town of 29 Palms and the idyllic Wonder Valley part of your training facility. Also, no public meeting in 29 Palms area, I noticed. BECAUSE???

**Date Comment Received** 3/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Your Acrobat Reader program provides the capability to zoom in to make the text of the document larger on your screen. You may also need to adjust the resolution of your computer screen. If those actions do not solve the problem, printed copies of the

document are available for viewing at local libraries as indicated in the Federal Register Notice of Availability: <http://www.federalregister.gov/articles/2011/03/01/2011-4461/notice-of-public-meetings>. The proposed action alternatives do not involve any increase in flying over residential areas and the land areas to be acquired would not include the City of Twentynine Palms or the Wonder Valley area. A description of all 6 action alternatives is available in Chapter 2 of the DEIS. Three public meetings were scheduled during the Draft EIS review period (in Joshua Tree, Victorville, and Ontario). The Joshua Tree venue was selected as a central point for residents of the southern Morongo Basin between Yucca Valley and the City of Twentynine Palms.

<b>Comment ID</b>	57
<b>Last Name</b>	Hendricks
<b>First Name</b>	Michael
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson Valley OHV area is irreplaceable and its loss would be devastating to many four wheeling families, off road businesses and the economy around Johnson Vally.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	3/1/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p>

**Comment ID** 58

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Comments Related to Johnson Valley Land Acquisition, To whom it may concern, Paragraph 2 of section 4.2.7.1 states the following: “With implementation of Alternative 6, approximately 146,667 acres (59,354 hectares) would be acquired within the west study area. Approximately 82,802 “usable” acres (33,509 hectares) or roughly 44% of the existing Johnson Valley OHV Area (189,470 acres [76,676 hectares]) would be available for public recreation at least 10 months per year (38,137 acres [15,434 hectares] available for 10 months per year and 44,665 acres [18,075 hectares] available year round) (see Table 4.2-1)”. The math here appears to be incorrect (189,470 minus 146,667 equals 42,803) not 44,665. As a result numbers used throughout this report should be adjusted accordingly. A restating of these figures would give a more complete picture of the impact of this acquisition. I suggest the following: 146,667 divided by 189,470 equals 0.77 or 77% acquired for military use. 38,137 divided by 189470 equals 0.20 or 20% available for restricted public access. 42,803 divided by 189470 equals 0.23 or 23% available for unrestricted public access. Twenty three percent (23%) of the current Johnson Valley OHV area would remain available for unrestricted public access or would operate under the current rules of access and use. Twenty percent (20%) of the current JV OHV area would be available 10 months per year for restricted public access with requirements for training, vehicle inspections, a permit process, and a log in procedure. Visitors would be expected to follow rules and regulations that have not yet been defined and could be prosecuted for failing to comply with these yet to be defined requirements. These entry requirements will probably limit the number of users to basically participants involved in organized competition. Most JV OHV users that I have encountered are day or recreational enthusiasts and will probably not choose to go through this entry requirement for a few hours of riding entertainment. In my judgment this acquisition will remove 77% of the current JV OHV area for a large percent of OHV enthusiasts. JV OHV offers the enthusiast the largest verity of off road terrain available in Southern California. The large verity of off road terrain at JV OHV is the feature that makes it the most desirable riding location in this area. I have ridden at JV OHV many times and it is the location that I have chosen to ride on nearly every off road outing. My judgment of the 23%, remaining for unrestricted public access, is that the verity of off road terrain contained in this section is greatly reduced. I will probably never consider using the 20% contained in the restricted public access area due to the hassle involved in obtaining entry permission. In conclusion this acquisition will remove JV

OHV as the most desirable riding area in Southern California. I for one will truly miss this world class OHV asset.

**Date Comment Received** 3/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The values listed in Table 4.2-1 are correct and are approximate acreages. As noted in Note #1 under Table 4.2-1, “usable” acreage is defined as the total acreage for public recreation, with the exception of small non-connecting areas, which for the purposes of this analysis are not considered “usable” for public recreation. Also as noted in Note #6 under Table 4.2-1, total acquisition in the west study area would be 146,667 acres, 108,530 would be exclusive military use, and 38,137 acres would be available for 10 months per year. Acreage available for at least 10 months per year =  $38,137 + 44,665 = 82,802$ . Percent of Johnson Valley OHV Area available for Recreation =  $82,802 / 189,470$  Johnson Valley OHV acres = 44%. The 44,665 acre area of Johnson Valley includes the Cougar Buttes and Anderson Dry Lake areas which would not be acquired under Alternative 6, and would therefore be available for public recreation 12 months per year. Additional text has been added to Table 4.2-1 to further explain the calculations and approximate acreages of Johnson Valley available for recreation under each of the alternatives.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the trend in availability of OHV land. The EIS documents both in Sections 3.2, 4.2, and 5.2 of the EIS. The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 59

**Last Name** Schiffern

**First Name** John

**Comment** Include me on the mailing list for updates.

**Date Comment Received** 3/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and interest. Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a wide range of other detailed materials about the proposed action are available on the project website at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 68  
**Last Name** Deam  
**First Name** Rita  
**Comment** I own 5 acres in landers, ca and cannot sell it,just hoping what ever is going to happen happens soon. thank you, Rita Deam

**Date Comment Received** 3/2/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. According to the timeline available on the project website <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>, if one of the action alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and then approved by Congress, the proposed acquisition of non-federal lands would occur between 2012 and 2014.

**Comment ID** 69

**Last Name** ehlers

**First Name** jayson

**Comment** Please leave the Johnson Valley open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 73

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand the need for training. I hope if you decide to wipe out the OHV in Johnson Valley you will at least consider joint use. I have been camping with my father and my sons most of my life in this area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/2/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 75

**Last Name** Smith

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** While I support all of the Armed Forces that give us our freedoms that I truly enjoy...I would encourage you to keep and use what you have and not disturb what truly is a pristine place to enjoy the outdoors. Dare I say what you have done to your current facilities is truly unjust!

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 76

**Last Name** Berg

**First Name** Nancy

**Comment** I am totally against the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area whatever the environmental study. First of all is the impact this acquisition would have on the small communities close to the area. Closing the open riding area would drastically impact their economies, and homes. And the area east of the base offers the same kind of terrain without the same result. After watching how the Russian military had to return home from Afghanistan in defeat, the USA should realize that a ground war is not the way to go. I realize I am no military authority nor have charts and statistics to back up my opinion and I am sure the decision has already been made, but as a resident of the area I feel the acquisition is not in our best interests. Thank You Nancy Berg

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 77

**Last Name** Middlebrough

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** My wife and our family have been using the Johnson Valley off road area for the last ten years. We have three daughters and six grandchildren. We have a total of 4 RV's and many toys. We have been part of the Morongo Valley Search & Rescue event, King of the Hammers event and we spend many holidays in camping in the Johnson Valley area. Our usable public lands are dwindling. Public lands are exactly that, public. I am against any encroachment by any government agency on this valuable public resource.

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 78

**Last Name** faulk

**First Name** jesse

**Comment** don't take the last and best spot to go rock crawling and once a year the most amazing off road race

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including the Hammers area). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 79

**Last Name** sawyer

**First Name** brian

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to off roaders. This is such a wonderful open area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 80

**Last Name** foster

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** The OHV area at Johnson valley is verry important to family as we use it every other month for camping, and off roading. Please keep the Hammers open to the public

**Date Comment Received** 3/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including the Hammers area). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 81

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an avid outdoor enthusiast I would like to make the comment to keep at least the area known as, "The Hammers" accessible during the time of non-use. With so few areas available for off-road use every sq mile counts and this area is very unique in geography that it requires a second look.

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing

public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including the Hammers area). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	82
<b>Last Name</b>	Rea
<b>First Name</b>	Christopher
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As a current military member, I can completely understand the necessity of having a place to train our Marines. As an avid off-roader, I also understand the need to keep what little public lands that are designated for off-road use...only for off-road use. In a time where we are constantly losing off-road areas to "wilderness acts" and other forms of land grabs by environmental groups, I feel that the government attempting to acquire what little we have left is completely un-acceptable. I am currently stationed on a shore command in Bremerton, WA with the US Navy. In the past 6 months I have made the drive down to the Johnson Valley OHV area 2 times and have another 2 trips planned in the next 6 months. It is close to a 2500 mile round trip drive each time. I have spent thousands of dollars on fuel, food, and other necessities to make those trips. While I know I am just one person, i would like to think that my contribution to the cities and towns (especially given the current economy) would not go un- noticed. I also know of people who travel, multiple times, from different parts of the country even further away than me. At the last King of the Hammers Race there were multiple teams from the east coast, some from canada, and even one team who shipped their vehicle from hawaii to compete. If the marines take over the proposed land, the race is all but done for. Think of the impact that will have on the small towns of Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow. Not to mention the economic impact on all the cities across the country where people were stopping to buy food/fuel/suplies. also, the impact of condensing the thousands of off-road enthusiasts into a smaller area must be thought about. every year environmental groups claim that we off-roaders do more damage than good, and while i disagree with their assesment, I feel that their fears will come true should the marines take the proposed land. while a majority of off-roaders are avid "tread lightly" fans, unfortunately when you put the same number of people into less than half the space their impact will more than likely double. so if the marines get their way, 3-5 years from now we as off-roaders will have to fight the environmental groups to keep what little the government left us.in conclusion, while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should</p>

either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS also evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 83

**Last Name** Hall

**First Name** Justice

**Comment** I wanted to make a comment about Johnson valley and what its going to mean to the surrounding towns. Johnsons valley is a meca for 4x4. Its unique terrain is noted by so many people around the world that wheel. I know events like KOH bring big revenue but there is people out there every weekend. Its a place that families spend their weekends and enjoy each other. On an average weekend I spend \$500+ on food, gas, ect. On a KOH week I spend 3x that. I'm one family that does this, only one but I know

there are a lot that do this more than I do. Please think of what you're taking from an area that doesn't have that much to offer. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 84

**Last Name** Moxley

**First Name** Patricia

**Comment** I am a property owner in 29 Palms and would like to have info on the acquisition of land for the military. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and interest. Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a wide range of other detailed materials about the proposed action are available on the project website at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>.

**Comment ID** 85

**Last Name** Carricaburu

**First Name** Tony

**Comment** Please reconsider taking the land known to the off-road & OHV community as the Hammers, aka Means Dry Lake - Johnson Valley. This area is an icon to the off-road enthusiasts and losing it would be devastating to not only the off-roaders but the businesses that are a part of the sport. I urge you to be sympathetic to our sport as we are in a never ending battle to keep public land open and the fight is a losing battle. Thank You!! Sincerely, Tony Carricaburu Editor / Manager [www.OFFROAD-REVIEW.com](http://www.OFFROAD-REVIEW.com) Online Magazine

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 86

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** After working 28 years for the USMC in a senior management position I have first hand knowledge on how the Marine Corps approach a land request. My years of experience with BRAC and base relocation has taught me that the Marine Corps always ask for more than they need! The Marine Corps has learned whether it's budget, land, people, equipment or facilities you ask for more than you need! Then adjust to the smaller amount that they receive! Sadly the Marine Corps is using this approach with Land Acquisition Alternative Six. Sharing this land with public will not work. Once you use the land for a bombing range the Marine Corps will not let the public re-use the land due to "safety reasons". Unexploded Ordinance will prevent civilians for entering the areas! Clearing ranges of unexploded ordinance is an ongoing problem for the Marine Corps on all of their ranges. Funding, equipment & personnel shortages delay range clean up! This has been an issue for Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms on their other ranges. As a homeowner in Johnson Valley I am against the Marine Corps taking way the largest offroad riding area in Calif. (Johnson Valley OHV). The effect on the local communities will be devastating; the fragile small businesses will not survive with the loss of Johnson Valley OHV. In my opinion illegal offroad riding will increase on private property in this area. The Marine Corps needs to consider one of the other Alternatives!

**Date Comment Received** 3/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access

to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding (refer to Section 4.2). The proposed action includes implementation of several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) designed to reduce these potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

**Comment ID**

87

**Last Name**

Bachman

**First Name**

William

**Comment**

As an avid off-roader and frequent user of the Johnson Valley area, in a time where we are constantly losing off-road areas to "wilderness acts" and other forms of land grabs by environmental groups, I feel that the government attempting to acquire what little we have left is completely unacceptable. This area is the Holy Grail for rockcrawling. At the last King of the Hammers Race there were multiple teams from all parts of the US, some from Canada, and even one team who shipped their vehicle from Hawaii to compete. If the marines take over the proposed land, the race is all but done for. Think of the impact that will have on the small towns of Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow. Not to mention the economic impact on all the cities across the country where people were stopping to buy food/fuel/supplies. Also, the impact of condensing the thousands of off-road enthusiasts into a smaller area must be thought about. every year environmental groups claim that we off-roaders do more damage than good, and while i disagree with their assesment, I feel that their fears will come true should the marines take the proposed land. while a majority of off-roaders are avid "tread lightly" fans,

unfortunately when you put the same number of people into less than half the space their impact will more than likely double. so if the marines get their way, 3-5 years from now we as off-roaders will have to fight the environmental groups to keep what little the government left us. In conclusion, while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS, Impacts on recreation.

The EIS also evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. In addition to the purpose and need for the proposed action, the Marine Corps considered fiscal, training, and environmental constraints associated with all of the suggestions from the public.

**Comment ID** 88

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please address how the base realigned boundaries will be marked and fenced where private property is next to new base property. How will buffer zones be developed between active training areas and nearby off base private property?

**Date Comment Received** 3/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has developed a variety of proposed measures to identify the boundary, including signage and public information and outreach campaigns. EIS Section 2.5.3 states "Significant and durable signage would be placed at all known and likely access points to the RPAA (as well as the exclusive military use area for Alternative 6) to ensure the public would be informed that the area they are entering is a military training area and that there are restrictions on public use. Signs would also be staggered across the boundary lines at an acceptable interval to make it difficult for anyone to actually enter the RPAA (and especially the exclusive military use area in the case of Alternative 6) without having seen a sign. For all action alternatives, a minimum of a 1,000 foot buffer between the property boundary and any training activities would be maintained as is currently done with the existing installation boundary."

**Comment ID** 89

**Last Name** Clark

**First Name** Gary L

**Comment** I served my country, while in the Navy, during Vietnam and now you want to STEAL my land. Johnson Valley belongs to US the American public. What are you going to come after next? I just came back from a gathering for Offroaders in the desert called Tierra Del Sol. We honored the men and women, in service to this country, with a special raffle drawing. I think you will find no more country loving military backing bunch of folks than the offroading community. Thanks for nothing.

**Date Comment Received** 3/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 90

**Last Name** Olson

**First Name** Mariam

**Comment** you talk about Johnson Valley/wondervallei/sheepholepass..saying sheephole pass being west...why aren't you including the desert heights as part of southward? living here and being rattled out of bed from bombs...gets real nervey..i wonder at times if the plains..helichoppers, aswell as the war playing will hit me and my house..I think you should buy our land from lear to poleline as well..all the cracks i have in my house since your war games started..I feel has lowered the vaule of my property...

**Date Comment Received** 3/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS has been revised to include reference to the community of Desert Heights located south of the south study area. Furthermore, analysis of impacts has been expanded as needed in the various resource area discussion related to impacts to lands adjacent to the south study area. The EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 91

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I fully support our USMC and would like for them to acheive proper training, I wish to ask that the Johnson Valley area be left alone for the off road community. More and more areas of the U.S. public lands are being closed leaving us less and less area to enjoy our recreation. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of open desert land within, CA, NV, AZ, UT and TX. Please condsier those areas. I would also suggest using desert land near the Mexico border, this would also help to keep the Mexican drug

cartels out of our land and from killing our people and will let us have our land back. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Matthew D. Fellows

**Date Comment Received** 3/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS, impacts on recreation.

As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 92

**Last Name** Moore

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I do not support the expansion of 29 palms by overtaking the public lands known as Johnson Valley, or labeling it a joint use area. I travel to Johnson Valley twice a year to recreate on trails and natural obstacles which are not open to the public anywhere else. Too many public lands are not accessible because they're scooped up into wilderness acts or shut down completely for the benefit of the environment. Keep our public lands accessible to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 93

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I appreciate the opportunity to comment on the proposal to expand the 29 Palms area into the current Johnson Valley OHV area. Although I understand the need to properly train our Military I do not support the proposal to use the proposed area for this purpose. I travel from Idaho to visit Johnson Valley. It is a unique area not rivaled anywhere I have traveled for OHV recreation. My last trip there was February of 2011 and I was amazed at how well the area has been taken care of. I see a very sustainable future for this area with OHV use! I do not support any mixed use alternatives either. I would like to see the Marines go a different direction or find an alternate location all together. I urge you to allow the public the use of this area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/7/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 94

**Last Name** OLSON

**First Name** MARIAM

**Comment** JOHNSON VALLEY, WONDER VALLEY, TO SHEEPHOLE PASS, THIS WHAT AREA'S THAT WAS METIONED IN THE PAPER, WHICH IS ALL GOOD. I LIVE IN DERSERT HEIGHTS, JUST SOUTH, WHERE YOUR PLANES, HEILCHPPERS, ARE. SINCE, THE BOMBING STARTED, ALONG WITH THE PLANES, AND HELICHOPPERS FLYING OVER MY PROPERTY, ESPICALLY THE BOMBING MY HOUSE AS INDURE CRACKS IN MY WALLS ALL

OVER MY HOUSE, WHICH IN MY OPION, HAS LOWERED MY PROPERTY'S VALUE..SOMETIMES I WONDER IF MY PLACE AND I WILL END UP BEING PART OF OOPS BOMBING...IT IS SCARY AT TIMES. I WAS WONDERING WHY YOU HAVEN'T OFFER BUYING THE LAND FROM LEAR AVE., AND POLELINE, TO MORONGO RD

**Date Comment Received** 3/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The Department of Navy acquires the minimum land necessary to meet its mission requirement, and to minimize impacts on local tax bases. As discussed in Section 2.2, the Marine Corps is proposing to acquire the minimum lands necessary to conduct large-scale MEB exercises involving three battalion task forces . The land that you suggest be purchased would not benefit a large scale MEB exercise as described in Section 2 of the DEIS. Moreover, much of that land is privately owned and the Marine Corps is trying to minimize the amount of private property that it acquires.

**Comment ID** 95

**Last Name** OLSON

**First Name** MARIAM

**Comment** I hope that there will be a offer on the table in te near future where you planes and all are...I am glad that we have the marines here doing their was games I realize that you Marines need this practice in order to keep America safe....thankyou

**Date Comment Received** 3/8/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 96

**Last Name** Winget

**First Name** Sam

**Comment** I believe that public lands should remain open to the public. Leave Johson Valley to the community.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 97

**Last Name** Long

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** I am not a local to the Johnson Valley area. I have been there 3 times, all for the King of the Hammers race. On each trip I have made it a point to do all my shopping as close to Johnson Valley as I can, spending over a \$1000 on each trip. I am one of 10,000+ people who were at the king of the hammers events over the last 3 years. If Johnson valley goes away so will King of the Hammers, so will hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent, all taxable, all responsible, all for the love of the outdoors and freedoms our forefathers left other countries to pursue here.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the local economy in the Johnson Valley area. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 98

**Last Name** Thrash

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Please keep public land PUBLIC

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 99

**Last Name** Gromicko

**First Name** Nikolai

**Comment** Coming from a military family, I understand the Marine's need to to train and to have an area large enough to do so. However, Johnson Valley OHV is one of the few places left in the country where off roaders can truly get out and wheel or ride, and considering that the off road community has been losing land yearly due to government and environmentalist land grabs, it just hurts to see that the Marines wish to do so as well. I've travelled twice now from CO to CA for the specific purpose of going to Johnson Valley to camp and off road, and I already have another trip planned for next year for the King of the Hammers race in February. I know of so many people that absolutely love this area, and the race itself has become a HUGE deal in the past couple years. It is now the top race to be in in the rock racing world, with this year's race drawing over 15000 people from around the globe. I personally know of many people from the east coast, Alaska, even Australia who made the trip to Johnson Valley for the King of the Hammers this year. Also, the impact of condensing the thousands of off- road enthusiasts into a smaller area must be thought about. Every year environmental groups claim that we off-roaders do more damage than good, and while i disagree with their assessment, I feel that their fears will come true should the marines take the proposed land. While a majority of off-roaders are avid "tread lightly" fans, unfortunately when you put the same number of people into less than half the space their impact will more than likely double. So if the marines get their way, we as off roaders will have to fight the environmental groups to keep what little the government left us. In conclusion, while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has

led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 100

**Last Name** White

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I feel it is wrong to take land away from the public when you are closing other bases as it is.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 101

**Last Name** Jacobs

**First Name** John

**Comment** The concept of sharing land for recreational and military use is done in Michigan, and allows for more recreational opportunities while maintaining required training grounds. I believe it is a good compromise between user groups, especially with the continuous closing of recreational areas without new alternatives being provided. I have reviewed the EIS Plan 6 and I was hopeful that a good balance had been worked out, until I saw an overlay of the land that would remain open part time. Although some of the recreational area would remain open part-time, a large chunk of the land would be gated off from recreational use. Based on this, I would like to voice my opposition to this plan without revisions to allow more of the area to be open part time. If this is not possible, then an alternate area should be opened to allow public use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID**

102

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Please respect the fact that our public land are endlessly being taken from us. The Johnston Vally OHV area is a very important piece of land for us OHV users to access. I don't feel it is the right of the Military (no matter how much I support you in other ways) to take our public lands we so desperatly need. PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE reconsider your area of need. Thank you

**Date Comment Received**

3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID**

103

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Would like to know more

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and interest. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a wide range of other detailed materials about the proposed action are available on the project website at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>.

**Comment ID** 105

**Last Name** genaw

**First Name** aric

**Comment** please keep public lands public. the military and federal government do not have any need to expand to this area. quit wasting money and put the country back to work.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 106

**Last Name** A

**First Name** G

**Comment** Please do not expand and take our public lands. Johnson Valley is the best rock crawling in the country. If you close this land to public use the local cities and county's will lose valuable revenue from the off highway recreation vehicle users. Regards.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 107

**Last Name** Cahill

**First Name** Justin

**Comment** I would like to keep this short and simple. Public use of public land is becoming more and more rare. Johnson Valley has been the home of King of the Hammers race since 2007 and has entertained the off highway vehicle community since its first discovery. The expansion of 29 Palms will close a large part of the greatest OHV land in America. I moved to the west coast for just this reason. The east coast has been littered with trail/land closings since I was able to par take in this OHV community. Please keep the land open for OHV use. My friends and family enjoy this land at least twice a year.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 108

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training 'please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off- road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces' please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines. This is far from a “not in my backyard plea”. Please do come to Montana to train. I am certain there are lands here similar to Afghanistan.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing

public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases or locations in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 109

**Last Name** Lovell

**First Name** Roger

**Comment** I live in Colorado Springs, Colorado; home of the Air Force Academy, Ft. Carson and Shriever Air Force base. I am familiar with the military and support military efforts whole heartily. A good portion of my disposable income is obtained directly from the local military. I am proud of my county and pound to be an American where I live free. My proudest day yet as a new farther was the day my 4 year son came home and recited the pledge of allegiance, with the words under god. As an American I take full advantages of the freedoms I have. One of greatest prides is public land. You may ask why would a Colorado native be concerned about public lands in California? In the past 5 years I have made 5 trips to Johnson Valley California to recreate at the “Hammers”. This piece of ground has a special part in my heart and I firmly believe this land must remain public. I support the military and fully understand the need for land to practice on. Locally Ft. Carson is trying to expand on to private land and literally take the land from families that have been on the land for generations. This is too much. Our military needs to learn to work more with the communities they serve. This is not a case of “not in my backyard”; this is a case of one American standing up for what he believes in. Please take a minute to think about the intent of “public lands” and consider what it does to not only communities but the individuals that use these lands when the land is taken away. It's time for this stop, and you can help. Keep our public lands public!  
Sincerely Roger Lovell

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including the Hammers area). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 110

**Last Name** Ellinger

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** I would really like to see this dropped, and leave Johnson Valley as an open OHV area. There are increasingly fewer areas for outdoor recreation, of any type. I spend a week in this area every year, more if I can. This provides tax money to the state, as well as many local businesses from myself, and many many others that travel thousands of miles to enjoy this space. Folks travel from the East coast, and can't even believe the amount of area so open to enjoying, instead of paved. This area has been a major contributor to the development, and very existence of Rock Crawling, even on a much greater scale than the Rubicon Trail! Closing this area off from the people of the USA, will have a very detrimental effect on many local businesses, CA state tax revenue, as well as companies all over the country. We are out in Colorado, and a significant part of our business goes to people who enjoy this area yearly, if not monthly! I hate to try an fathom the way this business would look should this area be taken from our citizens. Another thought folks have mentioned to me, is what about all the vacant land in Nevada that is adjacent current bases, yet not enjoyed by anyone currently? We've been fighting every attack on this sport, and every attack on outdoor recreation for years, from the folks who want no one to step on dirt, and now our own military is trying to take it away. I always thought the military was supposed to help the people in this country have a better life, a more joy filled live. Taking this land from the citizen will cause many thousands if not hundreds of thousands of folks to have much less joyful lives. We all know no one can work all the time, and this area is where so many go to enjoy themselves on the weekends, and take weeks off from work to enjoy this land. Please leave Johnson Valley to the citizens, and look elsewhere for a less offensive piece of land to use for the training.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases or locations in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 111

**Last Name** Scherer

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** As a family that enjoys recreation on our public lands, I urge you to consider the limited resources for the US citizens to have available. Johnson Valley is a unique area that is not replaceable for us who have come to love the area. We like watching you fly, why can't we all use the land at the same time? It's not like the ammo really needs to be live rounds to be good training. Thanks!

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley

would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID**

112

**Last Name**

Johnson

**First Name**

Bobby

**Comment**

I understand that the Marines need new / more realistic / bigger training grounds. I support the need. Just not here. Not in Johnson Valley. It seems OHV recreation is always under attack. More areas are closed every year. Johnson Valley is the premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to use is unacceptable. Please find another area. I've been to Johnson Valley once. I plan on visiting many more times. There are many other users like me, out of state or not that recreate at Johnson Valley. We spend our money in the local economy. The impact on towns in the area will be terrible. I support the Marines finding a realistic training area. I do not support the use of this area by the marines. I don't support any "joint use." Please find another area to train.

**Date Comment Received**

3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives

for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases or locations in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 113

**Last Name** gowans

**First Name** tyler

**Comment** As a current military member, I can completely understand the necessity of having a place to train our Marines. As an avid off-roader, I also understand the need to keep what little public lands that are designated for off-road use...only for off-road use. In a time where we are constantly losing off-road areas to "wilderness acts" and other forms of land grabs by environmental groups, I feel that the government attempting to acquire what little we have left is completely unacceptable. I am currently stationed on a shore command in Bremerton, WA with the US Navy. In the past 6 months I have made the drive down to the Johnson Valley OHV area 2 times and have another 2 trips planned in the next 6 months. It is close to a 2500 mile round trip drive each time. I have spent thousands of dollars on fuel, food, and other necessities to make those trips. While I know I am just one person, i would like to think that my contribution to the cities and towns (especially given the current economy) would not go un-noticed. I also know of people who travel, multiple times, from different parts of the country even further away than me. At the last King of the Hammers Race there were multiple teams from the east coast, some from canada, and even one team who shipped their vehicle from hawaii to compete. If the marines take over the proposed land, the race is all but done for. Think of the impact that will have on the small towns of Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow. Not to mention the economic impact on all the cities across the country where people were stopping to buy food/fuel/supplies. also, the impact of condensing the thousands of off-road enthusiasts into a smaller area must be thought about. every year environmental groups claim that we off-roaders do more damage than good, and while i disagree with their assesment, I feel that their fears will come true should the marines take the proposed land. while a majority of off-roaders are avid "tread lightly" fans, unfortunately when you put the same number of people into less than half the space their impact will more than likely double. so if the marines get their way, 3-5 years from now we as off-roaders will have to fight the environmental groups to keep what little the government left us. in conclusion, while I fully support the need

for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 114

**Last Name** Denard

**First Name** Justin

**Comment** Public lands should REMAIN PUBLIC. As much as I think our troops need the ability to train, I also believe the American citizen should also be able to enjoy any and ALL public land available to him or her. Shutting down this land for non-public use would further enforce the feelings that many have that the government is getting further and further out of touch with the

average American citizen's thoughts and feelings. Please let this land remain PUBLIC so people can continue to enjoy this land for many years to come.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 115

**Last Name** Ferravanti Jr.

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** To Whom it may concern-I firmly support our Armed Forces in every aspect. If it was not for them we would not have the Freedom to do any of this. However with our freedom we have public land that we the people will not be able to use. That makes no sense to me why don't they find another area. It would be much easier for them to find another area somewhere else than it would be for the off-road community as all of our favorite spots are becoming Wilderness Area. What about are children, what will they do? Get involved in something else they can't do with their family (video games, computers, gangs, etc..). What about the Economy I know I have brought a ton of Revenue in to the surrounding area of Johnson Valley, but most of all when is it going to stop. If they acquire this area they will want more, I am sure of that, and next thing you know it will all be gone. We can't afford to lose anymore recreational areas. What if the Marines just used the area for 6 mos out of the year, and the public has it the other 6 mos, I know there can be a compromise somewhere, whether or not they choose to compromise is beyond me. I have been involved in off-road activities for more than 25 years with my father, and what will the next generations do when there is no more public land that we as the TAX PAYER give our hard earned money for. It seems like all the government and other agencies want to do is use our money to put up more fences, and just close off all access for the people who pay for it. this closure will only hurt the economy, and last I saw the Marines were kicking ass as usual with the current training excercises so I see no need for them to acquire this PUBLIC LAND.This is just my opinion of this whole situation.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. In addition to the purpose and need for the proposed action, the Marine Corps considered fiscal, training, and environmental constraints associated with all of the suggestions from the public.

**Comment ID**

116

**Last Name**

Athorp

**First Name**

Jesse

**Comment**

By reducing the size of the Johnson Valley OHV area, and constricting the dates that it is open to the public, it reduces the draw of tourist dollars, specifically mine- Tolls, fuel, lodging, miscellaneous purchases and the Non-Resident OHV permit. Every time that I have to write one of these letters typically gives me a reason to think of traveling elsewhere in the western United states. Reducing Legal Public areas for OHV use, among other outdoor activities only puts greater stress on the remaining areas. While I understand that the Marines need more room for live fire exercises, The surely do not need all of the Johnson Valley areas that they requested all the time; Would it be possible for the areas that are currently public domain to remain that way most of the time? Can the USMC and John Q Outdoorsman not share the same space? If this issue is about airspace, Im quite sure that most of the users in the JV area wont mind High speed flyovers, In fact, If they're like I am, They would probably enjoy it. I am in full support of the USMC's need to train. I do not support them in this attempt to acquire an enormous part of the Johnson Valley and take it from

the public for good. Please do not take this area away from the people of California, and the United States. Come to Maine. I am sure that there is enough uninhabited land here that can be used for exercises.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

During the scoping process, a number of public suggestions for alternatives were raised. As discussed in Section 2.7, several alternative scenarios were rejected because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. Unfortunately, the suggested alternative land acquisition does not meet the screening criteria outlined in Section 2.3.1.

**Comment ID** 117

**Last Name** Zeilinger

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** As an avid off-roader, I also understand the need to keep what little public lands that are designated for off-road use...only for off-road use. In a time where we are constantly losing off-road areas to "wilderness acts" and other forms of land grabs by environmental groups, I feel that the government attempting to acquire what little we have left is completely unacceptable. That is all it seems is that the government takes and takes. Let public land be public for the people and not take it all away.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement

process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 118

**Last Name** Hauser

**First Name** Christopher

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training' please select another area. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rock crawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off-road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces'please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives

4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 119

**Last Name** VanPetten

**First Name** Karl

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am Active Duty US Navy an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training. Please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off- road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces' please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines. This is far from a “not in my backyard plea”. Please do come to Washington State to train. I am certain there are lands here similar to Afghanistan.

**Date Comment Received** 3/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. During the scoping process, a number of public suggestions for alternatives were raised. As discussed in Section 2.7, several alternative scenarios were rejected because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. Unfortunately, the suggested alternative land acquisition does not meet the screening criteria outlined in Section 2.3.1.

**Comment ID** 120

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Keep public lands open! Theres no sense in destroying what many people have a strong passion for by cutting off access to the best offroad area America has to offer

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing

public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 121

**Last Name** Tuttle

**First Name** Cal

**Comment** I am completely against the acquisition of the Johnson Valley BLM land for training use by 29 Palms. I fully understand the need to train our military with modern weapons and tactics, but Johnson Valley is the biggest and most popular patch of desert terrain designated multi-use in the nation - there is nothing to replace it for the public if taken for training use. This acquisition would displace tens of thousands of US Citizens looking for recreation, yearly – and have serious negative economic fallout on local communities from Yucca Valley to Barstow. There are equally viable training grounds in far less populated areas of both Nevada and Utah available to the US military - their only drawback being they do not have the misfortune of an adjacent marine base. Please continue looking elsewhere for training ground - the loss of Johnson Valley to the US Public will not be justified by the value military training brings. Cal Tuttle Fullerton, CA

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Thank you for your suggested alternative land acquisition. As discussed in Section 2.7, several alternative scenarios were rejected because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. Unfortunately, the suggested alternative land acquisition does not meet the screening criteria outlined in Section 2.3.1.

**Comment ID** 122

**Last Name** Osburn

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** I do NOT support the Marine's use of Johnson Valley. They will pollute the air and damage the natural beauty of the area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates visual impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.5 of the EIS) and acknowledges the impact to viewsheds in the Johnson Valley OHV area. As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to visual resources for any alternative selected. It is acknowledged that the proposed training exercises will generate substantial amounts of fugitive dust, as shown in the EIS tables that present estimations of air emissions for each project alternative. The EIS dispersion modeling analyses determined that fugitive dust emissions would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the national ambient air quality standard for PM10. The EIS only proposes to control fugitive dust emissions from proposed construction activities, as it would be infeasible to control fugitive dust generated from the proposed training exercises.

**Comment ID** 123

**Last Name** Angell

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I truly appreciate and support all of the service men and women that are the reason we have our freedom in this great country. However I feel that public land should be open to the public. Please do not move west into the Johnson Valley Recreation area with the 29 Palms Marine Base. Thank You Scott Angell

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 124

**Last Name** Weber

**First Name** Jesse

**Comment** As a former active duty military member, I can completely understand the necessity of having a place to train our Marines. As an avid off-roader, I also understand the need to keep what little public lands that are designated for off- road use...only for off-road use. In a time where we are constantly losing off- road areas to "wilderness acts" and other forms of land grabs by environmental groups, I feel that the government attempting to acquire what little we have left is completely un-acceptable. I know of people who travel, multiple times, from different parts of the country even further away than me. At the last King of the Hammers Race there were multiple teams from the east coast, some from Canada, and even one team who shipped their vehicle from Hawaii to compete. If the Marines take over the proposed land, the race is all but done for. Think of the impact that will have on the small towns of Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow. Not to mention the economic impact on all the cities across the country where people were stopping to buy food/fuel/supplies. Also, the impact of condensing the thousands of off-road enthusiasts into a smaller area must be thought about. Every year environmental groups claim that we off-roaders do more damage than good, and while I disagree with their assessment, I feel that their fears will come true should the Marines take the proposed land. While a majority of off-roaders are avid "tread lightly" fans, unfortunately when you put the same number of people into less than half the space their impact will more than likely double. So if the Marines get their way, 3-5 years from now we as off-roaders will have to fight the environmental groups to keep what little the government left us. In conclusion, while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train its soldiers I do NOT support the Marines expanding the 29 Palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the Marines should either expand the 29 Palms base another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition.

**Comment ID** 125

**Last Name** Morrison

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 126

**Last Name** Morrison

**First Name** Randy

**Comment** while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 127

**Last Name** Morrison

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 128

**Last Name** Morrison

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** while I fully support the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should either expand the 29 palms base another direction or locate another suitable area

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 129

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I do not support the preferred alternative #6 in that it would severely restrict public use of the Johnson Valley OHV area and affect the ground water in the area as a result of live fire practice. The eastward expansion offers better terrain for air/ground operations training.

**Date Comment Received** 3/10/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 130

**Last Name** Floyd

**First Name** Darin

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern: I am apposed to the expansion of Twenty Nine Palms into the Johnson Valley OHV Area. As an active off road enthusiast I use this land several times a year and it is one of only a few places available for the offroad community to hold events of the kind currentley held in Johnson Valley. Additionally, many of the local buisnesses are heavily supported by the offroad community and would lose a substantial portion of their income should this area lose it's value to the off road community.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 131

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Sirs, Please consider the ramifications on the civilians that use this area and the businesses that depend on that tourism. This is a unique place in the United States where ORV use is allowed and can support racing. That racing is a multi million dollar industry. I personally drive from Texas 2 times a year to use this area. I Understand the Military position on the need for this area but the citizens should not be shut out of the public land. All of the Public Land needs to stay Public. If that means a dual use for all of it, that is fine.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 132

**Last Name** Wright

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Some real important things to consider when looking at the proposal to move Marines into the Johnson Valley Area. The Johnson Valley OHVA is one of the few areas left that provide recreation for many thousands of individuals. will there be other areas opened up to handle the thousands that will be displaced? Closer to the largest metro areas? As a resident of Johnson valley we often find the noise created at the current facility a problem. Moving the Marines closer with live fire is absolute nonsense from a as safety and noise perspective!

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be

implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

**Comment ID** 133

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To begin, I must first make it known that I fully SUPPORT the Marine Corps. However, I am completely opposed to the 29 Palms base expansion. This would greatly effect OHV use in California. Johnson Valley and the Hammers trails system a the Mecca for OHV use. I would like to submit this entire thread on Pirate4x4.com as part of my comment: <http://www.pirate4x4.com/forum/showthread.php?t=664629> In that thread, literally hundreds of people have illistrated how important the area is to them.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the Draft EIS.

**Comment ID** 134

**Last Name** Conyer

**First Name** Jeremy

**Comment** Pleas do not take one of the best off-road sites away from the American Public. There are many people who dream that some day they can come out there and use those trails, please do not take that away from us. If you must use this land please allow us to use it when you are not, all of the trails. I am

greatfull for the american military and all they do to keep us safe, surely there is a plan we can all live with.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 135

**Last Name** Forsman

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** Keep public land open to the public! Stop closing public land to the public. It is our land we should have the right to use it. The Military already has plenty of land to use for training, they should use it.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 136

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Having recently made my first visit to the Johnson Valley OHV area - I feel obligated to voice my objection to the proposed military acquisition of the

area. The Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the premiere OHV area on the west coast and should remain open to the public at all times and forever. Any expansion of the 29 Palms Base area should be in a different direction in a different area. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 137

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I will submit comments at a later date.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 138

**Last Name** Conway

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training' please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing,

motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off- road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces' please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS also evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 139

**Last Name** Iliff

**First Name** Camden

**Comment** I'm just a normal person who enjoys off-roading fairly often. Closure of existing OHV lands will not stop individuals from enjoying off-roading. Rather, it will force those people into a smaller area and create more

negative environmental impact. Nobody wants to destroy the land in OHV areas, but when we are forced into such a small space, the negative impact is unavoidable. MORE OHV area needs to be created for ever-growing population who enjoy off- roading. Even seasonal closures have a significant impact and can often result in permanent closures. The acreage available for OHV use has be steadily declining for decades but the number of people wishing to use those resources has been growing. I understand and respect the need for the military to have places to train and to practice, but with the wars we have faced in the past decade involving less of armed services, is this a plan that is still necessary considering not just the immediate local impact of this proposed closure of OHV land, but also in terms of OHV access state-wide and nationally. OHV lands need to be protected from closures. It's one thing to close OHV land because of endangered species, but it's terribly sad that we will loose OHV land to an institution that so many of us off-roaders greatly respect. Thank you for listening to my comments.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the analysis presented in Section 4.2 of the EIS acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. Furthermore, the Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 140

**Last Name** Raker

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** The potential base expansion involving the Johnson Valley OHV area is devastating news to my friends and family. We have been offroading there for nearly 10 years now and Johnson Valley is more than a desert. It is a place where friends and familes come together to enjoy the great outdoors

and experience some adventure together. The memories we create at Johnson Valley stand out in my mind a really unique times. The people I share those memories with are some of my closest friends and family. Losing the ability for future generations to have these experience is a shame.

**Date Comment Received** 3/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 141

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please add me to this list and provide a CD of the EIS. Cass Aviation Svs. P.O.Box 1258 Yucca Valley, CA. 92286. perryeaton.cfi@gmail.com

**Date Comment Received** 3/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and interest. Your contact information has been added to the project mailing list. A CD copy of the Final EIS will be sent to the address provided.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 142

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm concerned with the expansion of military airspace and how it will limit local pilots and business aviation on flight training and further restrict our flying.

**Date Comment Received** 3/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 143

**Last Name** Frazier

**First Name** Chad

**Comment** You have enough base. Why take away people's access to OHV areas when it is hard enough to find true happiness during these tough economic times. I cannot believe a base is wanting to expand when others are shutting down.

**Date Comment Received** 3/12/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 144

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Adding or expanding restricted or special use airspace (SUA) around 29 Palms impacts all air travel - commercial, scheduled, business or private to the point that aircraft separation becomes difficult if not impossible. Squeezing, rerouting, or eliminating existing Victor Airways only adds expense and endangers the safety of aircraft while in the vicinity. Adequate air travel safety corridors must be considered and maintained in any reconfiguration of SUA to ensure integrity and safety of flight.

**Date Comment Received** 3/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 145

**Last Name** Trimper

**First Name** Brett

**Comment** As a homeowner in Johnson Valley, I am worried that my property value will decrease without sufficient open riding areas close by. My home is extremely close to the drawn line (a few hundred yards) and would limit my access to the lake bed for riding. I also enjoy the quietness and sounds of nature for which I bought the property. I already see helos close by and my windows shake from artillery during the week. As a son-in-law of a USAF Fighter Pilot, I bleed red/white & blue but please draw back the lines and allow more peace to the homeowners. Please go more towards the north and east if possible.

**Date Comment Received** 3/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 149

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** I frequently fly VFR between Las Vegas and San Diego, using the corridor between the current Restricted airspace/Bristol MOA and Turtle MOA. The proposed Western Restricted area would close off my alternative route (KMYF- HEC-KHND) and force me to fly over higher terrain. For this reason Alternatives 1,4,5,2,6 are a non-starter for me. Alternative 3, of all the alternatives, would have a significant, but the least, impact of the alternatives proposed. Alternative 3 does appear to be in conflict with the existing Cadiz and Danby private airports. For these reasons, I have to state that I can not support any of the options presented. As a veteran I support the needs of the military, but can not support the expansion of airspace in the already congested west coast area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 150

**Last Name** Ramage

**First Name** Christina

**Comment** My family and I are struggling and live very close to the proposed military training zone. How will this affect us?

**Date Comment Received** 3/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The proposed action may or may not affect you to some extent depending on your location and your use of the proposed acquisition areas. Chapter 4 of the EIS discusses impacts to various resource areas under each alternative. The Environmental Impact Statement and a wide range of other detailed materials about the proposed action are available on the project website at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>.

**Comment ID** 151

**Last Name** Parrinello

**First Name** John

**Comment** Sirs, Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training'please select another area. As an American patriot and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have the best realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Thank You for all you do to keep our country safe, please protect our best off road facilities in the country as well...

**Date Comment Received** 3/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as

much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 152

**Last Name** Swigard

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** To Whom It may concern: I am writing to express my disapproval of allowing the United States Marine Corps to expand their training grounds into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I am 100% apposed to the expansion. I have taken my family to the Johnson Valley OHV for the last 4 years. This is a unique area for the public to enjoy as an already established OHV area. The public interest in the the varying types of OHV activities continues to grow, yet our own government, the same government we fund, keeps closing or in this case taking away our rights to use this public land. The Johnson Valley OHV area is very important to me and kids. There is nowhere else like it in the country. We hope to continue to use this area for generations to come. Please consider to "Keep public land Public". Sincerely Jeff Swigard

**Date Comment Received** 3/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 153

**Last Name** Lefler

**First Name** Trevor

**Comment**

To whom it may concern: I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off- road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces' please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 3/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS also evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited

recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 154

**Last Name** Burke

**First Name** Donald

**Comment** I am firmly opposed to this Land Aquisition. I find it extremely difficult to believe that with all the millions of acres of government owned land in the US that the 29 Palms area is the ONLY area large enough for Marine operations.

**Date Comment Received** 3/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 155

**Last Name** Folena

**First Name** Rusty

**Comment** Please do not expand into the Johnson Valley Recreation Area, buy doing this you are taking away valueable land that teh OHV comunity can never get back, I know the land is next door the The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Corp Base but there has to be something that can happen to Save Johnson Valley. My Family have been using the Means Dry lake area as base camp for over 10 years and I would like my son to be able to enjoy it in the future. California does not have much land that a family can go camping on and bring there hobby with them weather it be Motorcycles or 4 wheel drive trucks or Jeeps. Johnson Valley is so unique that it is such a multi use area

where you can rise motorsycles or jeep it has all the right terrian for that please find some other area to expand too Thank you, Rusty Folena

**Date Comment Received** 3/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 156

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I do NOT feel that an expansion of the current base limits is required. I fully support the Marine Corp, but I feel this is nothing but a land grab. We off roaders have had land taken from us for many years - never has it been returned. Between this and the BLM, there will soon be nowhere to ride legally.

**Date Comment Received** 3/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As indicated in the EIS in Section 1.3, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill the Marine Corps' training requirement. A November 2006 Marine Requirements Oversight Council decision validated the need to establish a large-scale MAGTF training area for large scale MEB training. The Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for a MEB-level training. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Alternative 6 would retain public access to a large portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area. Alternative 6, while not the best alternative from either an operational or environmental impact perspective, is the optimal alternative given both the operational and environmental impact factors considered together.

**Comment ID** 157

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. My family and friends travel to the Johnson Valley several times a year to recreate on some of the most unique off road trails anywhere in the United States. These rock trails are one of a kind and do NOT exist anywhere else. For these trails to be lost would be devastating to the people who use them and to the local economy. Annually there are dozens of organized events held there. These events bring much needed money to the local economy. People buy food, gas, parts, snacks and patronize eating establishments in and around Johnson Valley. Multiple- use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training' please select another area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS also evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the

proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition.

**Comment ID** 158

**Last Name** bigney

**First Name** Shawn

**Comment** I am asking that you rethink your plans and and leave Johnson valley for public use, I have camped there for over 25 years with my famley and have some of the best memorys that any one could have. All I am asking is for you to rethink the plan and go east and leave our park the way it is

**Date Comment Received** 3/18/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 159

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hello, My name is Mike Evans I am an OHV recreationist. Let me start by saying that I do believe the military needs areas to train. I also believe We The People also have needs and enjoyment of "OUR" lands are one of those needs.. OHV use is increasingly being squeezed into smaller and smaller areas while the amount of folks using these lands are increasing by leaps and bounds. We are over crowded at the areas that we have left. The land is now being over used and the increased traffic is becoming deadly. I feel the military could also use these lands for many types of training while we also use them but don't feel that they have the right to steal these lands from the public. I also feel that the military would be around civilians in a real world situation and should know how to conduct themselves in a situation with civilians present. Air space shouldn't be considered an issue either. OHV community is very supportive of the armed forces and I don't believe any one cares about the airspace above the lands. In closing, If the military wants to take Johnson valley back then fine but only If the people are given

lands equal in size and quality else where in the vicinity to replace the ones lost. Eye for an Eye. Thanks so much for listening.

**Date Comment Received** 3/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. impacts on recreation. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands for mitigation.

**Comment ID** 160

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a Vietnam Marine Veteran I know they need land to have there wae games but why take the land given to us for OHV's. You will distroy the town of Lucerne witch is suported by the 1,000's of familys who come to enjoy the land. We all know there is lots of land they could use, they could go east and not hert any town, there is a lot of unused land at other California bses, like Edwards A F B, right next to my home, there is lots of land that they do not use. In 2008 I was in DC, I talked to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and he said they would be fair about the land. Now they shoud be!

**Date Comment Received** 3/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7, the Marine Corps considered several alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were rejected (including conducting MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other Marine Corps bases or locations in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or were inconsistent with the screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live- fire and maneuver objective training

requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 161

**Last Name** Vega

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I'm highly opposed to the aquisition of Johnson Valley by the Marines to expand their training area. Johnson Valley ("The Hammers") is a historical offroading area that is like a "Mecca" for offroaders around the world. To me it'd be like filling in the Grand Canyon with concrete to be able to make a highway accross it. There's plenty of similar "Afgan like" through out that part of the desert. Please spare our land!!!

**Date Comment Received** 3/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 162

**Last Name** LaGrange

**First Name** Barbara

**Comment** It makes no sense to civilians who have lived in the desert for over 30 years, to have the military consider the West Study area for expansion. NO. Go East! We may not like the alternative of expansion at all, but if you must expand don't threaten the public's established homesteads, small businesses, and desert townsites with a West Study alternative. NO. Go East. To quote directly from your Fact Sheet on your web site: "People have been drawn to the southern Mojave Desert for diverse reasons. Native Americans first visited the scattered oases that dot the landscape to gather seasonally available food resources and resupply essential tool stone. Later, hard-rock miners came in search of rare metals. Early homesteaders arrived in search of new opportunities for life away from urban centers. People

were and remain captivated by the stark and pristine beauty of the panoramic vistas, colorful granitic and volcanic landforms, and the vast undulating alluvial fans leading to sand dunes demarking the margins of scattered Pleistocene era playas. The gradual habitation of the region eventually resulted in the establishment of communities such as Twentynine Palms, Joshua Tree, Yucca Valley, Landers, Wonder Valley, Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Ludlow and Amboy, as well as in the formation of roadways that connected these communities to each other, and to the urban centers beyond. Railroad corridors transect the area as well. These desert population centers, both large and small, have grown closer in proximity to the Department of Defense military training ranges that were established during World War II and afterwards, including what is now known as the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) at Twentynine Palms." We are also aware that backdoor dealing with Senator FeinStein has forced you to consider avoiding Special Use corridors and trade of land use agreements east of 29Palms. It was a bad trade and now you have to backpedal to find appropriate lands .. FeinStein doesn't own the desert. Go East! Go East. If you have to expand then go East. Respect the desert dwellers who chose to live away from government interference, urban blight, and crowding. Respect our wishes.

**Date Comment Received** 3/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the impact of the proposed alternatives on natural, cultural, and socio-economic resources, and has reduced the number of acres proposed for acquisition. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 163

**Last Name** chamberlain

**First Name** matt

**Comment** dont do it !!!

**Date Comment Received** 3/19/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 164

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please find another area to take over the ohv areas in CA are far and few between and now you're threatening to make it even more difficult to recreate.

**Date Comment Received** 3/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 165

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a very popular off-roading area used by many people every weekend of the year. Good trails for motorcycles, jeeps, ATCs, hikers and rockclimbers, rockhounds and just camping. Many historical mines, quarries, homesteads, petroglyphs and vistas to explore. Surely a less used corridor could be used for military training!

**Date Comment Received** 3/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	166
<b>Last Name</b>	Buckley
<b>First Name</b>	Cory
<b>Comment</b>	Having been to 29 Palms many times I do not feel there is any need for the Marine Corp to expand and take over a large part of Johnson Valley. The Johnson Valley area is used for recreation by a large number of families and losing this area will be another will close off another public recreation treasure. I truly do not understand with all the cutbacks how the Marine Corps would be considering this or why it would be allowed. We have lost enough recreation areas and to lose this area when it is not needed is truly a sad thing.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	3/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As indicated in the EIS in Section 1.3, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill the Marine Corps' training requirement. A November 2006 Marine Requirements Oversight Council decision validated the need to establish a large-scale MAGTF training area for large scale MEB training. The Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for a MEB-level training.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under</p>

each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	167
<b>Last Name</b>	america
<b>First Name</b>	captian
<b>Comment</b>	where should we be able to use our land? That we have earned and pay ridiculous taxes on. Maybe the state could save some money by not paying the forestry workers 60k or more per year. Who in turn does all he or she can to hand out as many pay tickets as they can while doing as little actual forestry work as possible.I am absolutely sick of the state s constantly closing down trails for absolutely no reason other than because they can. This is America right?
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	3/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	168
<b>Last Name</b>	bergman
<b>First Name</b>	thomas

**Comment** The Marines should take the land that has already been closed to the public. Please do not take more land from us. I am a off roader in this area and have lost allot of access to public lands. take areas that have already been taken away from us. Thanks T.K. Bergman

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 169

**Last Name** Bobbitt

**First Name** Tonya

**Comment** Johnson Valley is one of the very few places that remain where people can go and off road. The Marines want to take this away from the public. It is bad enough that the people who off road are constantly battling a constant flow of lawsuits trying to shut down land that is used for off roading, but now this? The plan is taking away 2/3rds of the land in Johnson Valley. By taking this land away, off-roaders will have a larger impact on the land, because they will be unable to spread out, and allow anything to recoup. Instead the land will be used over and over again, taking away from the beauty that is the desert. Off roading has being a family activity that my family has been involved in for years. It's the one thing that has keep our family together, and allowed us to come together and spend time together without spending a huge amount of money on a vacation we cannot afford. This is public land, that is owned by the tax payer, not by the military, and it should stay that way!! I strongly oppose the land in Johnson Valley being cut off to the public, even if some of the areas are open some of the times. Do not take more land away from the American Public, that barely have anything left for recreation to begin with.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives

involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID**

171

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

We have been enjoying the desert for more then 40 years in this area around Landers. To take away peoples homes and land is crazy in these tough times. People like us who enjoy off road sports keep getting pushed into smaller and smaller areas causing more damage to the land then if we had a larger area to enjoy. We are proud Americans and are so proud of our Marines and what they do for our country-but this land thing is crazy. We need to cut spending let's don't waste millions buying up properties of people that don't want to move. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received**

3/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of any amount of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live-fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 172

**Last Name** Dozier

**First Name** Jeffrey

**Comment** Please consider the recreational needs of the public when deciding on public land designations. I am the father of three children and my wife and I dream of making a trip to access the natural wonders of Johnson Valley via hiking, offroad vehicles, and mountain bike. Please work to strike meaningful compromise into the preferred alternative which would allow for our forms of recreation to remain in place. The loss of diverse recreational access to wild places will result in a poor society overall. Allow for recreation to inspire conservation.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 173

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Ashley

**Comment** I would appreciate them not taking up any more space for this base. The base is already big enough and it will take up a lot more riding areas for people who enjoy riding around there. My family goes out through these areas many times throughout the year and it will cause a lot of riding trips to be canceled.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 174

**Last Name** Bunting

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** The Marines already have huge bases at 29 palms and Camp Pendleton, both in Southern California. Also being part of the Navy they have access to the huge Navy base at China Lake, also in So. California. Partner with the Army and use Fort Irwin in Barstow (also another huge base in So. Cal). Take a look at Nevada. Some of the bases there have the added plus of glowing in the dark. Where are the people supposed to recreate? The population grows unchecked while open recreation lands are continually being taken away.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 176

**Last Name** Bootsma

**First Name** Shaun

**Comment** While I support our troops, I don't think taking away what little land is left for the wheelers is the best option. by shutting down the bulk of Johnson valley you will be killing off the local communities and many other businesses around the country. as just one race held there in february, we brought in well near \$1 million dollars for the local economy and untold amounts for surrounding communities. as a wheeler there for the last 10 years, we've watched the marines train alot. there is plenty of room north of those

mountains that they want to take. personally, i don't think our troops should be fighting all the wars we are at the moment, but, that's another topic. please, think of the people that you will be effecting for some training ground.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 177

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The western area around Lucerne will stop all recreational and OHV usage in the area as well as greatly impacting the economy of the area. My stepfather, his daughter and son-in-law who live in Lucerne do not want any further economic degradation of the area due to the reduced access being proposed. Besides they would miss the ice cream I bring by when I'm out enjoying Cougar Buttes, Anderson dry lake, Means dry lake and Bessimer Mine Road. DONV

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The current preferred alternative (Alternative 6) was selected in part for the ability to continue to provide recreational opportunity, thereby minimizing impacts to the economy.

**Comment ID** 178

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been a strong supporter of the USMC my entire life. While I do want to see the USMC have whatever training facilities they need, Johnson Valley is the ONLY area of it's size that we can use. My only opposition to this expansion is the loss of PUBLIC lands that I will not be able to use with my grand children. If the Marines were able to arrange for another area of the same size somewhere in the Mojave desert to replace the lost PUBLIC lands, I, and many of my friends and family, would fully support this expansion. Please, replace the land acre for acre.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Unfortunately, the Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands for mitigation. However, the public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the live- fire and maneuver objective training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Furthermore, as a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public review period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and further reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 179

**Last Name** Dell

**First Name** Cliff

**Comment** Please, be respectful of the Johnson Valley OHV area. It is a very special place to the off roading community, both for the general openness of the area to explore a true wilderness and the uniqueness of the Hammers trail systems. There are entire industries focusing on building vehicles that can handles the Hammers, not to mention the local economy, from Yucca Valley to Victorville. This area is used by thousands of recreational users every weekend during the winter. Anyone thinking of closing the area should visit it over Thanksgiving or Christmas weeks and see the large numbers of peaceful folks using this land. You see a wide range of camping

styles (tents, to pop ups, to toy haulers, to class A RV's), a wide range of off-roading vehicles (motor cycles, ATV's, mildly built jeeps, to custom rock crawling buggies). You will see small groups of friends, large organized clubs, and multi generational families all enjoying this area in one way or another. Please find a way to satisfy our need for military preparedness, without taking this land from the off- road community.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is likely to be a direct impact on individual small business that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 180

**Last Name** Alcisto

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** I support the expansion of the training area for our Military to train.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 181

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support the expansion of the training area for our Military.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 182

**Last Name** Brewer

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I am strongly against this land acquisition. We as an OHV community are losing our riding areas left and right. We cannot afford to lose anymore land. The riding areas we still have are limited and getting over crowded. Over crowding means more accidents and possibly fatalities. Please do not allow this to happen.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 183

**Last Name** Stechmann

**First Name** Bob

**Comment** I am all for a strong military and believe proper training must be completed. However, I do not believe it is necessary for 29 Palms to increase the size of this already huge base by almost 30 percent. Future military conflicts will likely be in urban environments against unconventional (guerilla) adversaries like we are currently facing in Afganistan and Iraq. Training for these types of conflicts do not require 263 additional square miles of

training area. The Johnson Valley OHV area should not be closed or impeded by military training activities.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As indicated in the EIS in Section 1.3, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill the Marine Corps' training requirement. A November 2006 Marine Requirements Oversight Council decision validated the need to establish a large-scale MAGTF training area for large scale MEB training. The Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for a MEB-level training.

**Comment ID** 184

**Last Name** Corder

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Johnson Valley is one of the declining number of off-roading areas available to off-road enthusiasts. Unfortunately, liberal California and Washington politicians are gradually reducing the areas that are open for off-road users and we now face losing the entire Johnson Valley area for an expanded military training grounds. The domino effect of these closures will be fewer dollars spent on vehicles, equipment, gasoline, RV's, etc. because the off-roading community will get frustrated with not having available areas to participate in off-road activities. I appreciate the need for proper training facilities, and we have a kick-ass military that is respected and feared around the globe that has appropriately trained on the current military training grounds. Is it really necessary to take nearly all of the Johnson Valley area? Expand in the other directions first, and only take what is absolutely necessary of Johnson Valley-- PLEASE!

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 185

**Last Name** Bland

**First Name** David

**Comment** My family has been using the Johnson Valley OHV area for years. We have dealt with loss of OHV areas for many reasons over the years, but this would be a significant loss to our community. Please consider the current users of this area and weigh the benefits of this extra training land against the substantial loss of land for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 186

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** David

**Comment** Please No! OHV area users are already faced with many other land closures. What about another base? Perhaps Ft. Irwin. Or expand this to the east where nothing is. Sincerly, OHV user and Patriot.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 187

**Last Name** Cornelison

**First Name** Gerald

**Comment** I understand the need to train our forces. However, I strongly object to taking over Johnson Valley ORV Area. There are fewer and fewer places available for off road vehicle recreation in the desert. More users jammed into fewer available off road use areas means more safety problems and potential environmental overuse of the remaining designated areas. Whatever your expansion plans, PLEASE choose an option that leaves Johnson Valley ORV Area intact and available for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 188

**Last Name** Walrath

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** The military has already taken up enough pristine California desert and now it the time to say "enough is enough". When will it end? In times of economic hardship such as these the military should be cutting back its expenses rather than looking for new terrain to destroy. Do we really need more space to play pretend war with everyones hard earned tax dollars?? How about doing something useful with our military like putting more troops on the borders and catching actual bad guys rather than make believe ones. Oh wait...that makes too much sense

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 189

**Last Name** Stancer

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** our familey started going to Johnson Valley over 30 years ago, it has been a very good life for them, my children have grown up and now have famileys of there own and still go Johnson Valley with there kids,off roading has taught my children a lot about nature and how to take care of desert,I have riden all over Johnson Valley and still find thing that most people will never see, turtles mating, swarms of bee looking to nest, sitting on top of a hill and looking out across the desert is one of the best parts of my life, I never thought we could lose J.V, but now its in danger from my own government, after years of play riding and desert racing with AMA Disrtict 37 the thought of not going out there, is hard to swallow. I cant even think of the local people and business's that will suffer, the gas stations and market in Lucerne valley will be hit hard by any closure,not to mention the OHV suppliers and manufactures,I feel that no action is the best course, or move eastward for the expansion, dont take the last large open area away from the people who dearly love it and if it must be taken, give us a area of the same size, if it is closed it will be lost forever, the goverment never gives anything back

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined

that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 190

**Last Name** Grover

**First Name** Jared

**Comment** I work for the Navy and I understand the need for the military to find an area to adequately train it's soldiers. I do NOT support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. The area is greatly needed for the use of the public as public lands. Absorbing the land into the base will greatly hamper 4WD, Motorcycle, and ATV recreation that has already been reduced multiple times already here in California. I do NOT support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should expand the 29 palms base in another direction or locate another suitable area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 191

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I disagree with your aquisition due to the impact it would have on the current users, we have been using these lands for 40 years and feel that there are many other lands you could aquire in new mexico arizona and texas you are taking public land that cannot and will not be replaced due to the environmental groups that continue to shut down off highway land. The long and short is we have fought to keep this land open and we were here first and here come the marines and in less than 2 years its on the verge of being closed.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 192

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** If the marines are going to take this land they have the authority to find an equal amount of land that they could open up to the users who are going to lose there off highway land. The marines have the authority to over ride the environmental activist that will not open new lands for off highway use. You must offer an alternative to us the off road community. i look forward to your suggestions and help with starting the process of opening new land.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 193

**Last Name** Cumming

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** I vehemently oppose the expansion of the current 29 Palms military base. Me and my family own property in the Johnson Valley area and have enjoyed the serenity and peacefulness of the Johnson Valley area. We are also avid off- roaders and cannot fathom the idea of our desert being taken from us. We hear the wicked noise from the base on a regular basis now and know there will be a significant impact from noise if the expansion is approved. I vote no to "Alternative 6". I vote yes to "No action". If the base were to expand "Alternative 3 should be considered due to the fact that the battalions could converge on an objective within the current MCAGCC base. Please don't take our desert.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts. Noise exposure from existing/current conditions are provided in Chapter 3. Appendix H has four sections: H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling; Section H-4 is the noise primer. Airspace flight operations are assessed using the CNEL<sub>mr</sub> metric consistent with Navy RAICUZ Instructions. This metric accounts for the sporadic nature of airspace activity as well as the “startle” effect caused by low-altitude high-speed flights (see Section 3.9.1). The Maximum Sound Level (L<sub>max</sub>) metric was not specifically designed to measure impulsive sounds and although L<sub>max</sub> provides supplemental noise exposure information, the correct noise metric for assessment of land use compatibility is CNEL (and its derivatives). In addition to the aforementioned high-altitude refueling activity, modeled operations included low-altitude high-speed flight operations characteristic of existing and proposed flight activity at the Combat Center (see Appendix H).

**Comment ID** 194

**Last Name** Richardson

**First Name** Cary

**Comment** Please do not take land away from the Hammers OHV recreation area. Vehicle accessible land is becoming more scare every day with environmentalist concerns. Now we are having to fight closure from military acquisition. I have not yet been able to enjoy the Hammers myself, other than in pictures. But I hope to be able to get there one day and take my son. We need to keep areas like this open so he has a place to recreate when he owns his own jeep. Please keep our access open.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 195

**Last Name** myers

**First Name** monte

**Comment** Dear Sir or Madam, I am writing this letter to let you know how much the land at Johnson Valley OHVA will be missed if it is included in the Marine Corps base expansion. I have made at least two trips per year there for the past 7 years from Bakersfield, CA. I spend money on fuel, food, and camping supplies in the towns of Lucerne, Apple Valley, Adelanto, Mojave, Boron, Tehachapi etc. Environmental groups have been taking off road area's land for years, please don't take it too! Sincerely, Monte Myers

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 196

**Last Name** Marlett

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** I feel the needs of Marine Corps fire and maneuver training for the MEB and MAGTF are important but the constant fight for continuing OHV area access is important also. I do recognize that these proposed areas are the only alternative, as MCAGCC 29 Palms is "land locked" by protected wilderness on or near some of its borders. In the end, I would prefer to see the Marine Corps have non live fire access to the Johnson Valley OHV area in order for it to remain completely accessible to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 197

**Last Name** Cumming

**First Name** Kerrie

**Comment** My Husband and I bought a cabin in Johnson Valley and have completely fell in love with the people of the community and with the beautiful desert surroundings. We plan to build our retirement home on our property and enjoy all of Johnson Valley for many decades to come. I'm crushed by the thought of our retirement home being taken away from us. I understand the need to train our troops, however I don't think taking land away from hard working people is the answer. Furthermore recreational areas for off-roading, exploring, and learning about our deserts are dwindling. The desert may seem quiet but on the contrary it is very much alive. We observe others as well as ourselves exploring Johnson Valley and the pure essence of freedom that it brings. A small piece of freedom that we desperately need in an overly congested Southern California.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 198

**Last Name** Crawford

**First Name** Curtis

**Comment** I've look at the maps. I have read where the off road area would be still open 10 months a year. I still don't understand how you can put the off roaders in such a small area. Didn't the death of 8 people open your eyes? The off roaders are being squeezed into such a small area that the public lands open to all should be expanded not reduced. This is a travesty to the off road community. I for one am totally against any military land grab.

**Date Comment Received** 3/21/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 199

**Last Name** Pilkington

**First Name** Darrin

**Comment** My family and I would like to express our great desire and need to not, I repeat, not have the expansion of the military base 29 Palms expand into the area of Johnson Valley. More and more land is being taken by the government. Johnson Valley has literally saved my family. It has given us a calm peaceful place to spend quality time with our family in a time when our family was crumbling. I do not believe there is a real need for this

additional land when the hopes is to actually pull our troops out of foreign soil. Please reconsider this decision. My family needs this land.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 200

**Last Name** Tyler

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Completely against expanding the training area at 29 Palms. You have enough as it is. We are the most advanced military in the world, by far. Leave what open space we have alone.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 201

**Last Name** lombardo

**First Name** josh

**Comment** please do not take our land and the hammers away from us and our children. i am getting so tired of this state. this will be the final blow to finally push our family to move out of state.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 202

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hello, As an American who enjoys the personal freedoms we can all tank our armed forces for protecting, I support the military in their efforts to secure proper training areas. However, I am also a avid off roader and am very concerned about the potential loss of the Johnsen Valley OHV area. As you know as the urban development continues, more and more folks are looking for outdoor areas to get away from it all. Off-road enthusiasts #'s have quadrupled in the last decade and yet areas for them to recreate responsibly are declining. This of course increases the foot print at the areas still available. Another side effect is that if there is no where legally to recreate, less responsible folks may end up trespassing onto private property. Which only compounds the problem. I trust you will look at all options available including the proposed areas current use and user base #'s making sure that right long term decision is made with the best end result for all. Thank you for your time and am closely watching how this plays out. Eli Casey

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 203

**Last Name** pilkington

**First Name** sherrie

**Comment** My family and friends have been going to Johhson Valley for years enjoying our off road freedom AND the beauty of the untainted hills. We chose JV for its quietness yet accessibility to public necessities all the while in the middle of an off road haven. Currently my friend Brian Rupert bought a 5 acre property and my brother Ryan Cumming did as well a couple of miles away. Then last year my father purchased a property within walking distance to my brother! We're a close knit group of law abiding, married, happy families that get together at the different properties (off Ghost Road), sharing day rides on our quads, buggies and bikes then BBQing and having fires and playing games at night. We wear helmets, don't leave trash behind, don't drink and drive and maintain and update our properties and dwellings. I believe that JV has saved our life and limb because had we been forced to live and play in the more dangerous areas like Superstition and Glamis, surely some of us would be injured due to other's carelessness. Please do not take away my friend's and family's freedom of enjoying the open terrain. We feel safe in JV and will fight to stay there! Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 204

**Last Name** Cotten

**First Name** Glen

**Comment** Please do not take the public land use away from the public! I am a vet and believe the military has plenty of training area between California and Nevada.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 205

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I fully support the Marines and recognize the need to train, I feel that the existing property at 29 Palms is sufficient. It is one of the largest bases in the USA. The Johnson Valley area adjacent to the base is a premier recreational 4WD site. This area is a valuable asset to the 4WD Community and the surrounding communities who benefit from these activities. Please find a way to train the Marines without removing access to the general public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 206

**Last Name** Patteson

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Family and freinds have property and utilize the area for fun and relaxation. It would be a shame if that was taken away from them.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 207

**Last Name** Bryson

**First Name** Marc

**Comment** I would again like to state that I oppose the expansion of the 29 Palms in the Johnson Valley off-road area. It is unique and becoming very rare for the federal government to allow "open" areas for the always increasing numbers of off-road vehicles. I do understand the need to expand the base and hope there are other areas the USMC can utilize rather than annex a very popular off-road area. The area in question is known nationwide as a "place to be" similar to the Rubicon or Moab. Thank you for providing an opportunity to comment. I support our troops and hope there can be a different solution rather than annexing a very popular off-highway vehicle area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 208

**Last Name** Long

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** I support the military 100% and realize training is a huge priority. I am asking for a reasonable split of usable land. The desert is a great playground for young and old alike and is a place to foster family values and unity. Open recreational land is getting hard to find. Let's share.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 209

**Last Name** Williams

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** Why don't the Marines, simply coordinate with the ARMY on Ft. Irwin land which is as vast as the 29 Palms training facility. Marines have Pendleton (and you know we won't do any 'amphibious assault' in this day and age of the helicopter. How about you sell the coastal part of Pendleton or swap it for this land, to give recreationists closer access to open areas.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 210

**Last Name** Robert

**First Name** Matzell

**Comment** Keep Please Johnson Valley OHV area open!

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 211

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please send the CE of the DEIS as I am interested in the potential biological impacts caused by the expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 212

**Last Name** Danze

**First Name** Alex

**Comment** I have been an avid user of the Jonson Valley recreation area since i was 5 years old when my partent brought me camping.. Although i can understand the need for additional training area, i dont understand why an already designated OVH area needs to be selected? There are thousands of open desert miles which are not currentlty designated for OVH. WHY can't some of those area's be used?

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 213

**Last Name** Down

**First Name** Robin

**Comment** The current proposal of expansion does not adequately consider the economic and recreational loss to the surrounding community and related businesses. Stop trying to take land away from the public! The planned use of live fire in such close proximity to current homes and property is ridiculous and this whole expansion project should be stopped in the name of safety for the surrounding communities.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. Furthermore, the loss of OHV land over time was analyzed in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a

significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under the proposed action to enhance public safety.

**Comment ID** 214

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It is not the only place in this wide expanse of country that you can train. In this case you will be taking away land that avid offroaders use on a regular basis. There are not many places left in this country that allow us to enjoy our sport. Being the Marine corp allows you to use just about any area that you would like. In many cases you can get special use permits, where regular civilians can not. I am all for the well rounded and complete training of our armed forces, but I completely disagree that this is the only area that fits your criteria. Even if you do take this area for your use, history tells us that when you are done with it you will either hold onto it forever, or it will be reassigned so that our sport will still lose use of the area.

I can see where it would be easier for you to choose this area as it would be easier to get the nod from enviromental groups that know what will happen to it when you leave. Many of your own personnel, and members of other armed forces use this area. I would appreciate if you would keep this in mind. As I know you will do what ever you want anyways.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 215

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an OHV enthusiast I must voice my disapproval in expanding the 29 palms training area into the johnson valley OHV area. I understand the need for the marines to train but taking away this area from OHV enthusiasts is unnecessary. Making the trip to johnson valley is one we look forward to each year and loosing it would be a shame. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 216

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** THIS IS A TEST

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 217

**Last Name** St.John

**First Name** Lynne

**Comment** I would suggest that any branch of the military is not deserving of any more land than it already has and, in reality, should have some of what it has taken away. The military, all branches, are not good stewards of the lands, with a history that goes back to many decades of pollution, artillery shells left behind that have killed people who have come upon them, environmental degradation (in all its forms), and absolutely no respect for anything that might impact the environment around them. Further, the statement that the military needs additional "training" areas is specious and disingenuous at best. What does the military train young recruits for? For another Abu Ghraib? A reprise of US soliders engaged in atrocities in Kabul? Establishment of "Kill Teams"? No, the military is not deserving of anything.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 218

**Last Name** test

**First Name** it

**Comment** test comment

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 219

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep public land public. Freedom of speech should not require the divulgence of private information.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 220

**Last Name** Fox

**First Name** Roger

**Comment** The Marines have done just fine for many years and wars without the additional space. The environment in the additional space proposed would damage the fragile environment. I am opposed to adding the proposed space.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 221

**Last Name** Reed

**First Name** Rob

**Comment** I am writing this email in regards to the possible closure of land to public use by an expansion of the 29 palms area. I would like to say that I fully support our military in all their efforts and realize they need training to remain the world leader. That being said, the loss of the use of this area

(particularly to offroading) would be a horrible blow to our sport and the already hurting California economy. I live in Louisiana and have made the trip to the Johnson Valley area specifically for offroading and plan to do so again in the future. The King of the Hammers event draws approximately 50,000 specatators a year (many of which from as far away as the east coast and other countries) and has grow to that number in a only 5 years. I strongly urge you to at the minimum find a way to for this land to be a dual use area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 222

**Last Name** Gruenberg

**First Name** Justin

**Comment** I am writing in support of Alternative 3. The Johnson Valley OHV area provides an extraordinary landscape that is rivaled by no other in our country. The land is diverse, beautiful and unparalleled. Every day, numerous families recreate in this area via off road vehicles. This recreation solidifies the bond between family members and helps them forget any petty differences they may have. Simply put, off-roading promotes good family values, keeps our children out of trouble such as gangs and drugs, and provides for endless enjoyment. However, all the options presented (except for Alternative 3) take away that opportunity for endless enjoyment. While your intentions for the Marines may be noble, the effect on American citizens is palpable. There is no other area in our country like Johnson Valley. Please do not close it or take it away from us for 2 months out of the year. I don't trust the Navy/Marines to abide by the 10 month open access Alternative. I have been enjoying this area all my life and the proposed disruption would be devastating to my family and friends. Please, KEEP OUR LANDS PUBLIC.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 223

**Last Name** Lee

**First Name** Gerald

**Comment** Southern California Off Highway Vehicle area are getting smaller and smaller. The area the Marines wish to annex is THE premier destination in all of the United States for rock crawling. The trails there have taken 1000s upon 1000s of man hours to make. It is a destination that should be deemed a historical mounment. In fact, we should push for it to registered as a place of historical significance so it can't be developed any other way. The area the Marines seek is in very close to homeowners as well. Please do not consider the Johnson Valley area as a area for Marine manuevers. It makes no senses.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 224

**Last Name** Collier

**First Name** Bryan

**Comment** Please have the Marines come and train at Fort Bliss Military Reservation. There is more than enough room there. There is no need for the Marines to take any more public lands in Johnson Valley. Please leave the beauty of Johnson Valley to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 225

**Last Name** Bigelow

**First Name** Douglas

**Comment** To whom it may concern: Please consider the amount of impact the Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Draft EIS will have on the surround community and established communities by moving West and taking more lands from the Johnson Valley OHV area. Johnson Valley OHV is the home to one of the last great wildernesses that our great country has. I come from a military family and fully understand the need to support our military and to support our government. But, by moving west and taking the proposed lands of Johnson Valley many responsible members of the offroad community will not come back to this area. Each year for the King of the Hammers race I along with 25000 other members of the offroad community travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area. I travel from Maryland the 2600 miles to get to the event each year. My team alone spends an estimated \$10000.00 just to attend the event each year and almost additionally the same amount in the area supporting the local businesses. If the Johnson Valley OHV area is diminished I will not make the annual trip to the area and the I am sure the race will be moved to another area of the state if not out of the state to a more suitable location. I am sure there are other alternatives to supporting our military by moving east and or north of the area where even more lands are available. Doug Bigelow Bigelow Motorsports

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of specific project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	226
<b>Last Name</b>	Eisenhardt
<b>First Name</b>	Jay
<b>Comment</b>	To whom it may concern, I'm not in favor of this attempted take over of PUBLIC LAND. This area is one of the few areas in the United States left where we the off road community can go. The recent trend of taking away public land is a very disturbing trend. If the freedom of being able to go to and use public land is constantly removed from we the people. Then why continue to Fight for these constantly decreasing freedoms? Whom ever jumped on this Idea, which is obviously a knee jerk reaction to the current fighting overseas. Is apparently not familiar with the vast amount of land currently at the disposal of the combined Armed Forces of the United States. Being from a family with Army, Navy and Marine Corps back-round. I am an avid supporter of the Armed Services. But I don't support the attempt to take away the land in Johnson valley.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 227

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

In regards to the closure of Johnson Valley OHVA..... Please try to use another option other than closing this area to us off-roaders. This place is very special to me, my family and friends. I've camped there for 30 years, and hope to watch my young niece and nephews continue to ride and grow up there as I did. To be able to learn about wildlife and all the beauty of our California desert. I appreciate this area very much and always look so forward to visiting, and I hope that in the future I'll be able to continue to visit the beautiful place I call a second home.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 228

**Last Name** Woodard

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** Although I support the Marines fully, I am against expansion because it will close down a premiere off road riding area called Johnson Valley. There are very few places like Johnson Valley left after many years fighting enviro restrictions and closures. Just feels like if its not one thing its another. My family travels over 700 miles from Oregon to ride Johnson Valley because of the freedom and desert experience it provides. Guess I'll just have to stay home and read about how great it was. I cant see why the Marines cant expand south or east, oh well.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Although, many of the alternatives would acquire land within Johnson Valley, Alternative 3 (which is still under consideration) would acquire land east of the Combat Center.

**Comment ID** 229

**Last Name** Moss

**First Name** Andrew

**Comment** It would be terrible to lose such a destination as The Hammers and Johnson Valley. I completely support the USMC and respect the training needs. However, I would hope that a compromise could be reached for a joint use agreement at the very least. A better option would be to leave the recreation area unaffected. Regards, Andrew C. Moss

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 230

**Last Name** johnson

**First Name** steven

**Comment** just want to say that i think it is wrong to displace people who use the ohv facility for a military who can use any other land to do training just as easy as it would to take away the land for us to use.we are on the same team so we should be able to work together,so please dont take away our ohv play ground !!!!! so much potential in johnson valley

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 231

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** My family has owned property in Landers for over 40 years. Dirt bike riding has been our family's greatest pastime for generations. The proposed project would dramatically reduce our available terrain and diminish our ability to continue our tradition in the high desert. I hope that this project can be accomplished in a way that does not take our desert away from us and future generations.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 232

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I have been enjoying the Johnson Valley off road area for more than ten years. This is a unique are where family and friends can gather and enjoy the desert. The state of California has continued to reduce the amount of area available to the off roading public. The Marines already have all of the area at Camp Pendelton and 29 palms! You don't need any more land! Use what you have more effectively and quit trying to take our limited off roading resource.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 233

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please do not take any more of the land ,re johnson/stoddard/lucerne valley ,

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 234

**Last Name** molfino

**First Name** tony

**Comment** As a long time member of the santa cruz 4 wheel drive club as well as a long time outdoor enthusiast, It is a shame that we see all of our "public" lands being scooped up by the environmentalists, state and federal governments and knowing that my children may never know what it means to go 4 wheeling in some of the greatest areas that this country has to offer. I understand that our soldiers do need a place to train but i feel there has got to be many more areas that are not in such high use by the public that they can use to train on.

**Date Comment Received** 3/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 235

**Last Name** Gruenberg

**First Name** Gavin

**Comment** I am in favor of Alternative #3. Please keep Johnson Valley OHV open for current and future generations. Public access to this area has historically been extremely important and will continue to be important.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 236

**Last Name** Babcock

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** We live in Yucca / landers and are concernendabout losing more of our off road riding area's. Soon there will be no more area's for familys and kids to go for this kind of family fun. I am sure many of you enjoy this kind of riding that you can do with your family's as we do with ours. PLEASE think about it Thank you Jeff

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 237

**Last Name** Kauker

**First Name** James

**Comment** Its time for the Marines to move from 29 Palms and stop expanding into recreational areas for CA residents. I am against the expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 238

**Last Name** Kauker

**First Name** James

**Comment** Has the military ever considered combining your training mission with protecting our boarders? What would be wrong with moving all our operations to a 2 mile wide zone from the Pacific to the gulf of Mexico?

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. However, border patrol issues are considered to be outside the scope of this analysis.

**Comment ID** 239

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm very disturbed to see the amount of land being requisitioned by the Marines in this study. As I do support the marines and their efforts to train our solders, I also would like to see my children and their children enjoy the recreation available in the area. There is an enourmous amount of history that has taken place in the areas that you are trying to shut down to the public. In addition you will effectively be shutting down virtually all access east and west buy taking everything from the Mojave Preserve to Joshua t Tree N/P

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 240

**Last Name** Eyrich

**First Name** Gregory

**Comment** First let me state that I am a strong supporter of our military and the role that it plays in protecting the freedom of US citizens. It is exactly that freedom that will be taken away if the proposed "Land Grab" proceeds. I've been enjoying and riding the Johnson Valley area since 1976 - As soon as I could drive I was spending at least 2 weekends a month in the area. As you are fully aware, Johnson Valley is one of the few remaining open riding areas (OHV) in the state. It is home to a large number of AMA District 37 off road races, provides significant opportunities for the movie industry, is loved by Jeepers, Rockhounds, and simply families looking to get away from the cities. If Johnson Valley OHV is taken over by the military as has been recommended in the EIS it will force responsible OHV enthusiasts like myself to seek other riding areas, many of which are likely to be in illegal areas. I urge you to NOT take one of the few remaining Open Riding OHV areas away from the people. There are other alternatives for training which will not have such a huge impact on recreation in the area. -Greg Eyrich

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding and illegal off-road riding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 241

**Last Name** Thompson

**First Name** JoAnn

**Comment** Our family has begun off-roading in the past year to introduce our children to something other than city life. We have loved seeing all that California has to offer! It truly saddens me that this may be taken away. Johnson Valley is one of the few remaining areas we've only just begun to explore. Also, I can't imagine how the local mountain communities will suffer with the loss of income from travelers such as ourselves buying gas/food & camping. Please reconsider this plan! Don't take Johnson Valley away from the community! Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 242

**Last Name** Seda

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** I have been going out with family and friends to Johnson Valley and many other areas in the Mohave Desert since 1965. Over the years I have seen our motorcycle riding areas taken away, to the point where we only have a very few small areas left. This causes the remaining areas to be over used. I would hope that the Johnson Valley OHV area would be left for families, and the Marine expansion go in another direction. Most of our riding areas have been taken away to supposedly protect plants or animals. I have a great respect for this Earth, but, when plants and animals take a back seat to humans, SOMETHING is terribly WRONG. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 243

**Last Name** Armstrong

**First Name** Geoff

**Comment** I would like to voice my concern about the plan to annex a large portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area. I personally use the area slated to be annexed quite often and would be quite disappointed to see it closed. This area is a very unique area that cannot be found anywhere else in the country, the "hammer trails" are world class rock crawling trails, events centered around them bring a lot of money into the local economy, just ask any auto parts store or towing company in Lucerne Valley or Yucca Valley how often they get customers who broke their vehicles out there. We have lost enough recreation land from various sources, please don't add another.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson

Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including a majority of the Hammers area). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 244

**Last Name** Plowman

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** As the uncle of a Marine stationed at 29 Palms I think I can have some say in this land grab that is being asked for. The area to the west of the base includes many world class off road vehicle areas and nothing that would facilitate training for Marines. There are many other areas currently unused on the base or at nearby Fort Irwin that would be a much better fit. The area of Johnson Valley the Marines are asking for offers some of the premier rock crawling in the world. This area was set aside for public use and should not be closed for training that can be better accomplished on land already closed to the public by both the Marines and the Army.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 245

**Last Name** Sanderson

**First Name** Derek

**Comment** I am not in favor of the Johnson Valley OHV area being taken over for live fire exercises by the Department of the Navy. As an avid east coast OHV user, once public land is gone...it is gone forever. If Alternative #6 is chosen, I see the Department of the Navy's 2 month usage steadily increasing until the Johnson Valley OHV area is permanently closed to the public/OHV community. Has an economic impact study been conducted to show how closing or limiting public access to the Johnson Valley OHV area will hurt the local economy and the retail sales of companies that support the OHV community?

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 246

**Last Name** Terry

**First Name** Chuck

**Comment** I am against any land acquisition by the government out in the 29palms area that will affect the Johnson Valley off road area. I have been riding motorcycles and camping there with my family for years as well as many

friends of mine. It is getting harder and harder to find Legal areas we can ride our dirtbikes and enjoy the outdoors with Friends and family.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 247

**Last Name** Ness

**First Name** Garrett

**Comment** I would first like to say i am my fellow offroaders appreciate what our armed forces do for us. But what freedoms will we have left when we cant even enjoy offroading with our families and many of the soldiers and their families enjoy this hobby. With the economy the way it is Johnson Valley is a major income for the locals and their businesses. If you take this income from them it will put them in the poor house just like so many others right now. I understand training and exercises but we need to keep some public land public. It is being closed all over the country for reasons like keeping it protected for future generations and you guys are going to bomb it and run tanks all over it. We users have protected it better then that. I urge you and beg you to choose somewhere else to do your training operations. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 248

**Last Name** Patzer

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** As designated wilderness land would be better managed and "protected" as part of a military base than just as areas on a map, I would like to see a request for Congress to transfer portions of the east side wilderness to the Marines. Major area loss in the at times heavily used Johnson Valley Recreation area hurts. At least part of it can be shared with military use under the proposed alternative. It would be more favorable to me if mitigation for the lost recreational area could be accomplished by access by transient users to other portions of the base or other means.

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 249

**Last Name** barker

**First Name** bryce

**Comment** please review your choice for closing this riding area. a lot of families and groups use this area for recreation. i have been using this area for over 20 years. this area means a lot to me. both for the memories i have, and the ones i wish to create. this is a designated riding area. green sticker fees help fund this area. surely there must be an area that is just as compatible somewhere else for our troops to train. please take your time and think fully on this matter. most people don't care , but the ones that do, that actually

utilize this land, care about it tremendously. we do not wan't to lose it. thank you for your time. bryce barker

**Date Comment Received** 3/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 250

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been recreating in Johnson Valley for over 20 years. My family has taken me there since I was a small child. I have alot of fond memories from there of camping with all my family and their friends. Some day when I have children of my own, I hope we can continue the tradition. But now I am worried that it may be in jeporidy. I understand that the military needs areas to practice the manuveurs.I have been recreating in Johnson Valley for over 20 years But I feel that using Johnson Valley area is not in the publics best interest. Maybe if the expansion could stay to closer to 29 Palms and not to the west near Lucerne would be a better choice. I am not sure if you realize how many people visit Johnson Valley for many different reasons. Also the local bussiness count on the visitors money and many could go out of bussiness without the tourism. thank you, Kristi Hoffman

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 251

**Last Name** geck

**First Name** jeffrey

**Comment** I do not need to send a entire essay like some people send. All i have to say is i absolutely love Johnson Valley. I have grew up out there going every couple years. I am now a proud owner of a Jeep and our group goes out there and has an absolute awesome time. There is yearly events out there like King Of The Hammers which is also a Huge event where people come ALL over the world for. All in all i cannot imagine why in the world you guys would consider taking land that is used so much by the off road community. We keep the land clean and have desert clean ups for those who like to dump trash. My BIGGEST question for you guys is: What is so hard about going to Texas or another state where there is hundreds of miles of open, vacant land that is not used? Please consider keeping this awesome place open for us to use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 253

**Last Name** Bogner

**First Name** Danny

**Comment** I am interested in hearing about the possibility of the Marines trying to take over Johnson Valley OHV area, this area has been set aside for public use as a family off highway vehicle recreational area and is used by thousands of tax payers most every weekend of the year. Also why would this area be needed if the combat situation in the middle east is going to end in 2012, and be taken from public use for EVER.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement and a wide range of other detailed materials about the proposed action are available on the project website at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 254

**Last Name** bray

**First Name** robert

**Comment** I am writing again to tell you how disappointed I am with our government. The people of the little town of Lucerne Valley doesn't stand a chance against the mighty Marine Corp. I work and play in Lucerne and moved to the area to enjoy off-roading. Johnson Valley is the biggest play area that we have left and the marines are going to take it even though the people have asked them to go East. I spent a lot of money to build my house three years ago on the border of A.V. and L.V. and didn't know I'd be able to hear and see the Marines practicing. Now they want to come even closer to me! This is going to decrease my property values even more! There are many more reasons why the Marines should go to the East and there are so many other people besides those of us that live here, that are going to be greatly affected if you take over J.V.. Our Marines are the best trained in the world and have been doing fine so far. Why are you going to make the public pay for our governments greed? Please! Go to the East.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time- averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 255

**Last Name** berg

**First Name** john

**Comment** taking the johnson valley ohv area is not in the best interest of the population that recreates in the desert. there is plenty of desert to the east of the base. the off road community is getting tired of being pushed into smaller areas and eventually the will push back with exspesive lawsuits

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. In addition, Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 256

**Last Name** Isenbarg

**First Name** George

**Comment** Although I agree training like we wage war is very important, who are we waging war for, the public. When we take away lands that cannot be replaced to secure our way of life, are we not contradicting our own actions? I understand that finding another place, making trips to training areas, and any other option will cost tax payer additional dollars. This is still the action that should be done. Don't take away what amounts to over half of the known trails in a sport that has so few places to recreate. The military already must pratice deploying to wage war. Well deploy to pratice as well. Leave Johnson Valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 257

**Last Name** violette

**First Name** wayne

**Comment** i have grown up riding and camping in Johnson valley it kept me off of drugs and running on the streets of orange county I have 2 girls that I have raised and it has kept them drug free also. The public has very few areas left to OHV this would put us in much smaller locations which in turn there will be more injuries ext. Open the wilderness area the opisite direction that would give you more land and keep all of us off roaders very happy. The Marines can get that land open and we the people never would be able to get that area open for off roading. Thank you for listening.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 258

**Last Name** Moncure

**First Name** Ted

**Comment** I fully support the Marine's need to train, and politely request that you expand into land farther from population centers, especially land which is currently off limits to motorized vehicle enthusiasts; OHV use has been severely curtailed over the last 30 years by politically motivated land use policies, leaving only a fraction of the previously available acreage for recreational use. Expanding into the OHV use area of Lucerne Valley essentially eliminates one of the best venues for off road racing left in the

State of California. There are other areas such as the East side of Highway 395, or closer to Las Vegas, where the impact on recreational users would be less than in Lucerne Valley. Further, restricting airspace should be balanced by releasing other airspace (MOA's or restricted areas) currently used by the military. Isn't it better to have a large restricted area for training in a single location rather than several restricted areas across the Southwest? Getting around in the desert in an General Aviation Airplane requires dodging all manner of special use airspace, most of which is vacant and unused. How many thousands of gallons of avgas is burned flying around these empty MOA's and restricted areas? What is the impact on the economy, and on the environment? Would it be possible for the Marines to share Edwards AFB and use the land around that area for these exercises rather than appropriating more public use land and airspace? Once again, I respectfully request that this plan be reconsidered as part of a larger land use plan which prioritizes the needs of the US citizens who pay taxes to support the military, who use the land, and a compromise be proposed which would allow for training room while minimizing the impact on the local community. Thank you for your consideration, and thank you for your service to our country.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 259

**Last Name** Slay

**First Name** Clifton

**Comment** I am wholly opposed to a complete land grab proposed for Johnson valley. The two month training time is acceptable as long as it is not a precursor to a twelve month permanent occupation. This land is the core of the the off road competition and recreational industry and greatly effects people at many levels. Recreationalists, media, manufactures of a large spectrum of products and services all gravitate to the area from the U.S. and from

around the world. This spawns income to the local area and promotes and expands interest in the off road industry, ultimately increasing commerce country wide. Johnson valley is one of a very few off highway Mecca's left in our country, with this continued posture there will be no land left for our current and future generations. As a veteran of the US infantry I can empathize with the necessity for quality and realistic training areas, however I hope that a mutual compromise can be made in Johnson valley's regard that is fair for all perspectives of it's use. Thank you, Clifton Slay

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 260

**Last Name** Williams

**First Name** Brady

**Comment** I Feel the Marines don't need anymore land in Johnson Valley.I feel you would be taking away from me and my family.We love to go there and run the trails and Dessert.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 261

**Last Name** Stephens

**First Name** Clark

**Comment** Don't close Johnson Valley. It's the last frontier for some of us.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 262

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close anymore open riding areas, as a group we are constantly being squeezed out of more and more recreation areas. There are also too many homes to close to war game training.

**Date Comment Received** 3/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 263

**Last Name** Casto

**First Name** James

**Comment** I have nothing but respect for our American Military, I spent 4.5 years in the Army. The area near Means Dry Lake has some of the most popular 4 wheels in the country. These trails were developed by the Victorvalley 4 wheelers Club and have been heavily used by many 4 wheel drive clubs across the entire country for many years. My question is, isn't it possible to expand into the open desert toward the east of the base. As I drive from the Arizona border into the 29 Palms area on Hwy 62 I see a vast open desert from Vidal Junction to 29 Palms.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 264

**Last Name** Athon

**First Name** Donald

**Comment** The areas open for recreational off-road vehicle use are continuing to shrink state-wide. Though sensitive to the need for the military to carry out their necessary training, it would seem that their options for expanding training areas are much greater than those looking for public lands on which to recreate. If this land acquisition is absolutely and uniquely necessary, perhaps there can be some land provided in another area presently controlled by the military and yet not in critical use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to

designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 265

**Last Name** Putman

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** Simply put, there are few wide open areas left where off-road enthusiasts can take their families for a real get-away. Johnson Valley is legendary for exactly that kind of destination. I look forward to trips there where the kids aren't on their cell phones, PS3, XBox, etc.. but are spending quality time away from the hustle with family. PLEASE don't take this away. I will support our service men and women until I bleed. But it is this type of free lifestyle that I believe they are fighting for. Freedom and Liberty. These are public lands... let the public keep and use them. Thank you. Kind Regards, Matt Putman and family.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 266

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** if the Desert Turtles will be affected, I would say no but there is a lot of area out there.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 267

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to go on record as opposing any restriction to OHV use in this area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 268

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please reconsider taking so much quad riding area, I can see how the few other areas will handle all the riders.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 269

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Don't take what little recreational land we the public have left for OHV.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 270

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I say no to the marines taking anymore land. NO

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 271

**Last Name** okeefe

**First Name** kevin

**Comment** I object to removing land from the BLM controlled area. this area has been under preservation of the BLM to provide long term recreational use to the citizens of the US and to provide a controlled enviornment for the floral and fauna. After years of protecting this region all is lost if the military conducts service operation in this sensitive region.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 272

**Last Name** Prewitt

**First Name** George T

**Comment** Greetings: If this does end up happening, I would be behind option 6 and take the 10 months/year or so we as off roaders, and campers would get.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 273

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Keith

**Comment** The Johnson Valley area needs to be open from the Cougar Buttes area, east to the Means Dry Lake & Hammer Trail area. This area is heavily used by families for camping and off road fun. We are all patriotic Americans & want the Marines to have the training they need, but the area is so large, that we should be able share this beautiful rugged desert. As far as the Environmental Impact, the Off Road users will do less damage than the Marines and there training will. By closing this to the Off Roder's, you will force them to over use the remaining areas that are open to ORV activity. That would be bad for the environment. PLEASE... Don't Tread On Us.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the

Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use (including the Hammers area, Cougar Buttes, and Means Dry Lake). Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 274

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I certainly understand the need for training and recognise the requirement for this proposed action. I am an off roader and outdoor enthusiast. Please do not encroach on the eastern side of the base. I have seen the wildlife that reside in the mountains. The Desert Bighorn Sheep are beautiful, majestic and attempting to squeak out an existence in the area. Even though the acquisition does not encompass their usual habitat, it will be very close. I believe that closeness will affect their lifestyle. These shy and elusive creatures climb many mountains in search of food and I cannot imagine what a disturbance the actions of Marine activities nearby would do to their existence. I would rather see the land be taken from the western edge in the Johnson Valley area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 275

**Last Name** Baker jr.

**First Name** Dennis

**Comment** If you take public or private land you should have to replace it. Eminent domain should be a crime.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 276

**Last Name** Cumming

**First Name** Larry

**Comment** As a landowner on the edge of the proposed acquisition, I oppose the proposal on the basis of safety, preserving the natural habitat and serenity of our environment, and strongly urge the government to find another alternative that does not so devastatingly affect the Johnson Valley area. At present, we hear some of the Marine activity, and find it disruptive from time to time.....should the area expand as proposed, all residents in the area would be powerfully negatively affected, to an extent that is absolutely unacceptable.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. Although proposed training activities would increase noise levels in adjacent land areas, noise levels would not exceed the threshold criteria outside of the proposed acquisition boundaries. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 277

**Last Name** Cumming

**First Name** Patricia

**Comment** My husband and I own land bordering the ORV area of Johnson Valley, and are extremely concerned about the proposed takeover of land for the Marine Base. We and our children are avid ORV'ers and nature lovers, and have developed a great love and appreciation for the beauty of the Johnson Valley area, it's history and natural beauty. We take great pride in making every effort to preserve it's intactness, and in sharing it with amazed and impressed visitors and friends. I believe that this would be lost if the proposed changes are implemented, and the beauty and perhaps more importantly, the safety of the area for all to enjoy, will be compromised. Do NOT allow the proposal to go forward!

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 278

**Last Name** Garmon

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** As a 3rd generation family that recreates in the Mojave Desert, I am in 100% DISAGREEMENT with the following statement from you're web page; "Twentynine Palms is the only location with sufficient land and airspace potential to meet the training requirements"... This is a major land grab, essentially a theft from the Ca. people. I love the Marine Corp, hoooa! However, you have enough training space as it is...please leave this alone.

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 279

**Last Name** Clavett

**First Name** Steven

**Comment** Hi my name is steve clavett. I am sending this in To help the efforts of many other friends and fellow offroaders. Now i do greatly support the military and especially the marines in what they do for us, our country, our saftey, and our freedom. And i am forever in debt to these outstanding men and woman. I do understand the need for this land in order to train and ready people to better prepare for what they are about to face. How ever. This land is become almost a life goal for people like me. Seeing how people can work together and have fun in the way of offroading in the johnson valley area is very special to me and my community. My father has been very active in what the offroad community has been doing out there with the "King of the Hammers" race and it has become more than just getting some friends together for a weekend of fun. it is a tradition and for some a way of life. I have shared some very special times there with my father and have always hoped to have kids of my own and to be able to share this experience as it has been shared with me. I am now attending school for auomotive in hopes to one day. make it out there with my own offroad rig myself that I have built and prepared just so I my experience what has becomea legend. Please do not strip me from my dreams. There has to be anouther place where you can train and support our troops. i do not want them to go un trained i would just like it to happen at a diffrent facility. This place represents A sort of home or well being for allot of people. And if you take this away from us it will be devistating to more people than you can imagine. Please for the sake of current and future offroaders. Do not take away johnson valley. Thank you, Steven

**Date Comment Received** 3/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 280

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Can not view your files even though we have Adobe 9.4.3 as you stated we need. Don't know why 29 palms can't continue to use/share the area of FT. Irwin. The government has taken over enough land. The area proposed (AKI Johnson Valley/Hammers) is greatly used by off-roaders and is a very scenic area. Environmentalists keep finding ways to close everything to off-roading. The land and people can and have gotten along well together for many years. Leave us somewhere to go. Don't know why you provided the public a opportunity to speak as the gov. always takes what they want anyway!

**Date Comment Received** 3/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S. such as Fort Irwin) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 281

**Last Name** Loiselle

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** I believe having a trained Marine Corps is very important. I also believe that Johnson Valley is a cherished public use area that has been and continues to be enjoyed by many for many reasons. These types of Public lands continue to shrink, California OHV funds continue to be misdirected and many other area's around the base that do not encompass a OHV area

should be considered. I believe the direction should go east of the Base where many do not go or recreate.

**Date Comment Received** 3/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 282

**Last Name** Hatzenbuhler

**First Name** Glenn

**Comment** ohnson Valley has been an Off Road Recreation Area for 40+ years. In fact, it is one of the few remaining Off Road Areas left for vehicle racing. While I am aware of the training needs of the USMC, I feel other areas surrounding the 29 Palms could be utilized. If you must use this particular area, an acre for acre land swap must be implemented in order to address the future needs of the Off Road Recreation Area users.

**Date Comment Received** 3/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 283

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider moving east out of the recreation area. My family and I depend on area's like the Johnson Valley for our type of recreation. Motorized access is what makes it possible for my family to enjoy the outdoors. I am currenty dis- abled and my wife is handicapped. Without this access it would be impossible for us to enjoy the back country. Thank you, Robert Escalera

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 284

**Last Name** kapko

**First Name** pat

**Comment** After using the Johnson valley area for over 30 years I feel the Marines should look ans areas to the east of the base

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 285

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** By closing the Johnson Valley the tens of thousands of people that ride and recreate in the Desert will be squeezed down to even smaller patch of desert. This over crowding will put the public at risk and over use of the desert will impact the small patch of renaming desert still open. This will force Illegal Use of the Closed areas and encourage illegal riding and driving in environmentally sensitive areas. Every citizen should insist the Military Share the Large bases surrounding the 29 Palms base not take more desert. Te Army recently expanded and took over a large section of desert just north of Barstow. They should share with the Marines!

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and the potential for illegal riding. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 286

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I are opposed to the Marines taking over a portion of Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley is the largest OHV area in the U.S., and should remain that way. We have been going to Johnson Valley as a family for years. Moreover, we live in Lucerne Valley and the economic impact on our town needs to be seriously considered. The businesses in Lucerne Valley survive on the off-roaders that go Johnson Valley. The Q&A states that it would still be available ten months out of the year. Two months of this land being closed to the public will have a negative impact on these businesses and may cause some of them to close their doors. Again, WE ARE OPPOSED TO THE MARTINES TAKING LAND FROM JOHNSON VALLEY.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 287

**Last Name** Marcum

**First Name** Donald

**Comment** Just wanted to share my thoughts on the new land acquisition. I recently visited Johnson Valley OHV area last month for the King of Hammers Race. Johnson Valley was a great place. I feel it was a huge mistake to take this land away from all of the enthusiasts. Myself from CO and two others from MO flew into Las Vegas and rented a RV and camped in Johnson Valley for the week. We spent a great amount of money in the local lucerne valley area. Im not sure if totals have been made but Im sure millions were spent into the local economy during this one week event. Everyone worked well with BLM and their strict requirements at this year's KOH race. If Johnson Valley is kept open this event will continue to grow and bring more money into the local economy than the local could ever imagine. Please keep this area open!!!! We are losing land to legally use more and more every day. This is really a unique place I feel everyone should get a chance to experience before its taken over and closed.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 288

**Last Name** Eberstein

**First Name** John

**Comment** Due to the dwindling areas of availability for OHV users I would like to see the USMC leave the area as is. Civilian and Military co-existence rarely works and usually ends in one or the other leaving. I have stood my watch and understand the need for good training. There is plenty of underutilized areas already restricted that should be looked into before these lands are seized.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 289

**Last Name** pealstrom

**First Name** eric

**Comment** my concern with the amount of land the marines want to take, it will take away from open desert that i refer to as a second home! i grew up near 29 palms marine base (in yucca valley) and having to deal with that. i have no problems with them wanting to expand for training just not to the west. the west is pretty much all that's left for us ohv users in the Johnson Valley area. with so much land to the east that's not open to us.why cant the marines go that way. its further away from the population as well! the noise and air traffic will be a major problem being that close to major desert city's and towns. taking away from the desert for ohv use will also hurt some

smaller towns in the area with the loss of much needed business. not to mention with people not going riding then they do not spend money on or purchase ohv's which hurts that already weak industry. i have already been in the bad side of the decline in the industry due to the crash of the economy and was out of work for 6 months. if this expansion goes through it will be another big blow to the Southern California off road industry.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 290

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am against expansion of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley. Expansion into Johnson Valley is inconsistent with the Johnson Vally OHV Area Management Plan. The impacts to OHV recreation would significant, which would also negatively impact the economies of the small communities surrounding Johnson Valley. At a time when OHV use has been steadily rising, acreage available for OHV use has been decreasing. The further decrease in available acreage due to the base expansion to the west would be devastating. I recently traveled from my home in Western Colorado to Yucca Valley, CA, along with seven other friends and family members, for the sole reason of enjoying the OHV recreation available in Johnson Valley. With the acreage currently available for OHV recreation,

we were able to enjoy 6 days of fun in the desert, and spent 7 nights in Yucca Valley. While we were there we stayed in a local hotel, purchased fuel several times, purchased groceries, visited local 4WD shops for repairs, made purchases in local auto parts stores, and ate in several different local restaurants and coffee shops. Another group from Colorado, larger than our group, was there the same week we were, also spending their vacation dollars in the local communities. It's due to the current quality of OHV opportunities that recreationists like us make the 700+ mile trip to spend our vacation time and money in Johnson Valley. We wouldn't do that if the base were to take away the public's access to the public lands that are of high value to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The EIS also evaluates land use incompatibilities and inconsistencies in Section 4.1.

**Comment ID** 291

**Last Name** Lowe

**First Name** Norman

**Comment** Hello, I understand the need for training,being former military myself.I believe there is room for both. I and my sons are desert racers in a club which was born from ex wwII military after discharge. Please dont take one

of the last spots left to ride and camp and spend time with family. Thank you for listening, Norman Lowe

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 292

**Last Name** Hirvela

**First Name** George

**Comment** It's public land!!!

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 293

**Last Name** Rauen

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** The off roading community should be reimbursed with the same amount of land for our use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 294

**Last Name** Barker

**First Name** Don

**Comment** I am completely against this land accusation. My Family and I spend approximitly 10-15 days a year camping, riding in Johnson Valley. As a tax paying citizen I feel my freedom is slowly being taken away. There are only a few areas we can ride our ohv vehicals and taking Johnson Valley away from the public will only cause other open areas to be more crowded but also more dangerous. Please reconceder this land grab and listen to the public input. Thank You Don B

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 295

**Last Name** SHULER

**First Name** EARL

**Comment** I BELIEVE IN A VERY STRONG MILATERY. VERY STRONG. NO BODY TAKES ON ONE THEY KNOW THEY CANT BEAT. AND I BELIEVE IN CARRING THE BIGGEST STICK ALSO.NOT TO USE FOR EVIL BUT FOR GOOD..I HAVE SERVED IN THE US NAVY AND AM PROUD TO SAY SO. I LOVE AMERICA AND THE MILATERY. BUT I HAVE LOVED TO RIDE AND RACE MOTCYCLES ALL MY LIFE. AND SEEN HOW WE THAT DO HAVE

HAD TO FIGHT FOR EVERY FOOT OF GROUND WE RIDE ON FOR OVER 40 YEARS WE HAVE HAD LAND TAKEN AWAY FROM US .PUBLIC LANDS THAT WE SERVED AND DEFINDED TO KEEP AS FREE AMERICAN. THE LUCERN VALLEY AREA HAS BEEN A GREAT PLACE TO RIDE IN FOR OVER 50 YEARS.AND NOW YOU ASK US TO GIVE IT UP AND LEAVE US WITH NOTHING. IF THE GOVERMENT GIVES US ANOTHER LARGE AREA TO USE AND RIDE IN IT IS OK. BUT DONT JUST THROW US A BONE. AND THINK IT WILL BE OK.THERE IS FAR MORE LAND IN THIS COUNTRY THAN WE WILL EVER USE FOR OPEN RIDEING. SO IF THE GOVERNMENT TREATS THE PEOPLE OF AMERICAN THAT LOVE TO RIDE AND USE FOR RECREATION. AND IT IS GOOD LAND THEN I HAVE NO PROBLEM WITH IT.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 296

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to lend my support for the Marine Corp expaning their trainig facilities at 29 Palms. Having spent time in the area as a guest of a retired Marine as well as a periodic recreational user of the Johnson Valley OHV area and surrounding areas I would like to lend my support to Alternative 3 as the best alternative. I believe that Alternative 3 will provide the Marine Corps the needed space for training and have the least impact on the the citizens of the area and recreational users. Please make Alternative 3 your preferred alternative. The current preferred alternative - Alternative 6 is superior to alternatives 1, 2, 4 & 5 but has a greater potential for a negetive impact on the local citizens and recreational users thus I believe that Alternative 6 should be ranked second to Alternative 3. What are the proposed 2 months that the public would be restricted from portions of the

Johnson Valley OHV area under Alternative 6? Please keep in mind that the Johnson Valley OHV area currently sees minimal usage from May 15 - October 15 with peak usage occurring during the remaining 7 months. Alternative 3 is a great alternative / option and I hope that the Marine Corp will successfully pursue this alternative / option.

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The proposed two months of usage have not been determined at this time; however it is expected that training would occur in the spring and fall. Exact timeframes will be determined and communicated to the public if Alternative 4, 5, or 6 is selected.

**Comment ID** 297

**Last Name** Barnes

**First Name** Bruce

**Comment** I am upset that the military and the BLM are constantly trying to take away our off road areas. I am an avid off roader and I respect the desert highly. I participate in CORVAs Clean Dezeret program every year. I always take away more trash then I bring. I "spot correct" and or report vandalism and or abuse of the dezert. I know alot of this si due to the tragedy that happened at Luncerne Valley last August. My opinion on that issue is that it was no fault of the drivers and the fans were too close to the track. I am pleaded not to take anymore of our off road areas. Thanks. Bruce Barnes

**Date Comment Received** 3/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 298

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We as Americans appreciate the great work the men and women of the military are doing. I myself are a veteran and believe it is our duty to support our country. But I have a real problem with another big land grab of our public OHV land. Having lived in Calif for 25yrs, Ive watched acres after acres being fenced off from the public and turned into preserves for the enviroment. With this land grab it will take at least half of the Johnson Valley public OHV land, the same land we take our families and friends out to enjoy the beauty of the high desert. With the econuts grabing public land for national preserves and the military needing more for training, whats left for the public. If this action happens, the state needs to repace the acerage like for like with land in the high desert. With 29 Palms being the largest Marines base, isn't it large enough?

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 299

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** If the 29 Palms training area is the only place where the Marines can fulfill their training need, then they need to go east and expand to the Arizona boarder. I am aware of the small area of protected land east of the base, and if expanding east, this would cause a bottleneck for training. Well, what if this was a war, what are the Marines going to do, say sorry, can't go that way, because of a bottleneck. Take that land too then. The Marines are not worried about preserving the environment anyway, not when they use life munitions and bombs. Go east, stay out of Johnson Valley. Stay away from the people who live there, do business there. Don't take their homes, go east, nobody is out there. Don't take the best recreation area in Southern California, Johnson Valley OHV Area. It is very sad the people in our country has to fight their own military for what is theirs, when there are other solutions available. You have over 900 square miles already, if you can't make it happen with that, what is the problem? Go train with Army in Barstow. You go to war with them, go train with them.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 300

**Last Name** Stocker

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** The continued training of our freedom fighting forces is paramount to anything that could conflict my recreational riding and camping tours. But, I am pleased with the Co-habitation of the training grounds. You have an established 2 month schedule and the OHV areas are open for use the other ten months of the year. THANK YOU, Military and political leaders. By putting the military training first and still letting the public in and planning for us to be there is a great bennifit for all interested parties. The ONLY way for me to keep my freedom and my freedom to ride is for the military to be there first.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 301

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Do not take the Johnson Valley OHV lands from the public. There are many alternative methods and land areas that can be used. This is stealing from the citizens of America.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 302

**Last Name** Sims

**First Name** James

**Comment** The area under consideration has very unique and challenging terrain suited well for the type of off-roading my family has enjoyed for three generations. While my entire family understands and respects the need for specific features in our Armed Forces training grounds, we respectfully request that the areas surrounding Means Dry Lake be left open to the public. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 303

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I hope that this does not go through. I live in and recreate in this area. My family and many friends have been utilizing this public land for many years. I would hate to see it closed down to such a small area. I race the District 37 desert series and this will drastically affect it and the entire ohv

community. Which will intern effect the economy. My towns economy is greatly affected by the weekend recreation dollars that are generated by the ohv community. I hope this expansion does not go through. It would be a shame to cause even more people to become unemployed so that 1% of the United States population can have a bigger training area.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 304

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand the importance of training troops for combat. However, with the vast amounts of land to the east and the resources already available at Ft. Erwin, I fail to understand overtaking the area currently being used by the off-road vehicle users. We have already limited areas to recreate and this acquisition will severely impact us.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 305

**Last Name** Callicott

**First Name** Charles

**Comment** I am a supporter of the US military, however I am adamantly opposed to the acquisition of land in the Johnson valley off road area. Wholesome family recreation is getting hard to find. Off road areas are increasingly under attack and closure. protection of public lands should be our highest priority. What is the point of spilling American blood only to close ourselves out of our own land? Military training is of the utmost importance, but not at the expense of the land and life style the military is tasked to protect. Respectfully submitted, Charles Callicott

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 306

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please discontinue the thought, and action of seizing land from the taxpaying ohv community. We have been stangled to death already by the enviromentalists, we don't need to lose any more riding area from the military too. We pay our taxes, and bring in large amounts of money into the lucern valley and neiboring cities with our races. Our people are of family nature, and our racing is our life. many of our racers are active and retired military, police and fire fighters. We are the good people of the usa that fully support our troops and federal funding for the saftey of our nation. Please don't take from us, the people that love and cherish you. There are many better options rather to take our land. please refrain from this and take

land elsewhere if absolutly needed.the ohv community loves you guys,please show us some love and let us be,and let us keep our racing. If you take this land you will destroy an american tradition.the only other place we have is red mountian,and that is limited to. I drive hundreds of miles just to race here and be wih my friends and family.please don't take this from us.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 307

**Last Name** Hunt

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I understand the issue of space. Please understand the off road communities position on space. For decades, we have been pushed into smaller and smaller areas to recreate and participate in our sport to the point where there is hardly any land left. If there was a compromise where one area of restricted land was given to off roaders in exchange for what the Marines wish to take, then there would be more support. However, with the current options, this is not the case and as a result, we are losing again. It is sad. Between the environmentalists and now the Marine Corps, there soon will be nothing left.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 308

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** I feel the concerns of the THOUSANDS of off road families that use the Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle area have not been properly addressed in the EIS. In addition the affect on the surrounding economy will be significant and also has not been addressed properly.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation. The EIS analysis found that alternatives involving acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). The EIS found that there would be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 309

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Once the public land is gone it will never be returned. Loss of this land would be a blow to freedom; freedom to use the land as the public sees fit. The recreational vehicle community is under attack in California by environmentalists. That attack should not be compounded by the US Marine Corps. I would support their project if there was other suitable land opened to recreational use.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 310

**Last Name** Galletta

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I respectfully submit that the Johnson Valley OHV area remain open to public access indefinitely, without limitation. Johnson Valley OHV is a jewel of the OHV community and has been enjoyed for generations and should be accessible for generations to come. I believe the offroad community has less of an environmental impact than any military operation conducted in the area. I also believe that our community should not agree to share the area with the U.S. Marine Corp because I believe the Marine Corp will determine that more training time will be needed to conduct exercises in Johnson Valley OHV and our right to access the land will be gone. Therefore, I petition to opt for No Action- ( No New Land). I respect the U.S. Armed Forces and all service members for their sacrifice to uphold our freedom at home. We have the most powerful military force in the world. Surely our forces can maintain this strength without encroaching onto Johnson Valley OHV. Sincerely submitted, Robert Galletta.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 311

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Wayne

**Comment** There are so many things wrong with this...Environmentally: Whats worse for the plants and animals, atv's, dirt bike's, 4x4's or 3 battalions of tanks? Economically: You're going to crush apple and lucerne valleys. If this expansion is allowed to happen there will be no reason for anyone to pass through these cities. That should put a dent in local businesses and tax revenues. Safety: California already has too few ohv areas and you plan on taking one more away. which mean more and more people in the remaining areas. Land use: This is public land after all. I really enjoy the space and freedom it provides. Its great having somewhere to go that doesn't charge an

entry fee for some tables, a pit toilet and the option to pay \$10 more for wifi. Alt 6 is still a land grab. Should we be excited the marines lock down 3/4s of the area in question and leave 1/4 for us depending on the time of year? Fort Irwin has plenty of space and I doubt the Army is training 100% of the time. As for your 'goals' not being compatible, schedule some time when the army isn't running maneuvers and do whatever you want.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response**

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study.

Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally

prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 312

**Last Name** Sigwing

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** There isn't a service member around I would not give the shirt off my back to, but who is running the show in our military? Marines need all this space to practice a large scall battle? Who is keeping up with current events at Marine headquarters? Maybe the Chinese could pull this off but do the Marines think the Chinese are going to waste resources on a desert war in the middle east? No, they are smarter than us. Also, if they invaded the US; do we really believe they will head for our desert south west to do battle? Our current enemies do not have the resources to fight that kind of war and the Chinese would not head for the Mojave to have it out with the Marines. This is just a blatant waste of tax payor money. Our military needs to be mobile, efficient and deadly. Do the brilliant generals really believe that there will be a war in the future were a bunch of tanks and soldiers will line up across an open area from each other and then say ready set go!?! We need a competent run military and the mentality this land grab is based on scares me. It is not about proper training it is a money grab.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training

**Comment ID** 313

**Last Name** Rogers

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** As a military family who supports our warriors in every respect, I oppose the proposed land grab in Johnson Valley California. This area is regarded the world-over as the premier off-road destination in the world. The King of Hammers race brings tens of thousands of people to Means Dry Lake Bed to witness the world's toughest off-road race. I understand that the military would like to expand their training area into our off-road Mecca, but to me, you are taking away land owned by the people, against our will. Using this land for military operations will have a far more negative impact on the environment than families driving their Jeeps do. Also, once you start dropping ordinance in the area, it will never again be given back to its rightful owners (the public) for safety reasons. We have already seen how this works out in other areas of California and in Nevada. Its amazing that given the vast expanse of desert in the southwest, due to military use and environmental regulations, the public only gets to enjoy a very small portion, and now you plan to take that. Please reconsider taking this land away from us, so that our children and grand children can enjoy it like my father and I have.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the

final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 314

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** When is all this land grabbing going to stop? 29 palms is an area in which I have enjoyed outdoor recreation for years and to think that all this will come to an end makes me sick. I am all for the training of our armed forces, but why dont you grab land in another country like IRAQ, or Libya or another country that the US invades for unknown reasons. Please reconsider taking all of our land for this purpose.

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 315

**Last Name** Modliszewska

**First Name** Kinga

**Comment** I'm a AMA District 37 member, and before each race we are admonished about the environmental protection of the desert turtles. We are required to stop and to carry (in the proper direction!)each turtle we see on our road in order to protect it. I wonder what difference does it make, since the U.S. army will blow them out either way! I do not agree for taking public land from the people. I do not want to lose Johnson Valley OHV, where my family spent quality time. U.S. Army has enough place to train somewhere else!

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 316

**Last Name** Lilburn

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** To whom and at what address do you address written comments to the DEIS?

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The address to submit written comments was provided on the EIS cover sheet, and is: Mr. Chris Proudfoot, Proposed 29Palms Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Project, MAGTFTC, MCAGCC, Bldg. 1554, Box 788104, Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

**Comment ID** 317

**Last Name** Herrera

**First Name** Jim

**Comment** This sucks

**Date Comment Received** 3/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 318

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and friends use Johnson Valley as means to relax and enjoy some offroad activity at least twice a month. Please leave us some room to roam and enjoy the vast desert to get away from all the rush rush.. I have 3 youngsters that always ask "Daddy, When are we going camping again". I would like to keep on saying, "2 more weeks" Thank You, Steve Roberts

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 319

**Last Name** Eddy

**First Name** Max

**Comment** I Max Eddy & Family ask the Marines or the U.S. Military to stop Invading are Public Lands(Johnson Valley) for the so called use of more training. The Natl. Training Center at Ft Irwin has already expanded on our Public Lands to the North of Us here in Barstow. Now the Marines want to take the Very Lands We have left to Recreate on, to the South(Johnson Valley).STOP, Go south towards the "Yuma Proving Grounds" and Make yourself a Corridor there, and Expand east and west at the U.S. border and Really Train the Marines for Real life urban Situations that could use Your Modern Warfare Technology , seal the Border and Stop the Drug cartels and human traffickers from treading on US Soil.and Making there own Corridor's. Further more stop wasting Billions of our taxpaying Dollars on a Expansion that is taking away the very Lands that the People of the U.S. Recreate on. The US Military Should protect Us from evading forces from taking our land , But the Military is the very force taking our land that We have Left to Recreate on.STOP THE NONSENSE AND GO SOUTH TOWARDS THE BORDERS AND MAKE GOOD OUT OF A BAD SITUATION.Stop Making Us people in the Mojave Desert feel like 1800 Native Americans being kicked off Our Reservation by the US cavalry !!.We already Gave 100's of Square miles to the Army at Ft. Irwin.Squeezed out and nowhere to Go. Sincerely ,Thank and God Bless the USA.Max Eddy Family

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other

alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID**

320

**Last Name**

Mock

**First Name**

Chris

**Comment**

I have been following this issue for some time. As an active offroader, my wife, two daughters, and I have spent many weekends exploring the area in and around Johnson Valley and the Means dry lake bed. Those trips have provided my family with many fond memories and hopefully many more to come but I am concerned that the current plan of limited access, 10 months, is only a stepping stone to complete closure of the area. As a veteran of the US Air Force, I appreciate the need for top level training facilities for all branches of our military and I support land acquisitions when necessary but in this case I can't see the advantage of training lands so close to popular offroading areas. It seems like an accident waiting to happen to place live fire exercises so close to public use land or even worse share lands. As I mentioned before I am very familiar with the area and know there is more than enough land out there between 29 palms and highway 40 away from the popular offroading areas that can serve as raining areas. It is my opinion that NAVFAC and the Marine Core stay away from the popular offroading areas in Johnson Valley and expand East for their training areas. Having a shared use area in my opinion is dangerous and only provides opportunity for the future complete closure of the area after one or two inevitable incidents. Thank you, Chris Mock

**Date Comment Received**

3/29/2011

**Response**

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS

are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID**

321

**Last Name**

Garrison

**First Name**

Nevin

**Comment**

Yes we need to train our troops. Yes we need land to do this. But you need not to take this land from us The People. There is plenty of land east of Johnson Valley that is more than applicable to host live training. The impact of this would be devastating to the off road community. It would also destroy the lively hood of many business and organizations the depend on the users of this land to generate revenue for their business. I strongly oppose the joint uses of Johnson valley as we would not be able to use this land once live ordnances have been fired. This would be considered a hot zone and would be permanently shut down to the public. SAVE JOHNSON VALLEY!!! Thank you Mr. Garrison and Family

**Date Comment Received**

3/29/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range sweep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted

Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). If acquired lands were transferred back to public domain, the Marine Corps would be required to comply with range closure procedures (USEPA 40 CFR Part 300), Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Base Realignment and Closure Policies (BRAC), Reporting Hazardous Substance Activity When Selling or Transferring Federal Real Property (40 CFR Part 373), and Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) (10 USC 2701).

**Comment ID**

322

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I was brought up in rural Illinois on a farm and participated in the Boy Scouts for the majority of my adolescent life. The outdoors have been a part of my life for as long as I can remember and I want to pass this on to my children. I have been taking my family out to Johnson Valley, Cougar Buttes, and the San Bernardino National Forest as often as I possibly can for camp outs and family recreation for the last 3 years. I think it is an important part of teaching my children about the environment and the responsibility we have as human beings to be good stewards of it. My children have been able to see and experience the outdoors in a way that many my civilian peers have only seen through books and the internet. This also gives my wife and I an opportunity to really press home, what we believe, is a good moral foundation for our children. As a member of the off-road/Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) community and having been a U.S. Marine for over 17 years I have the following comments to be submitted on the Draft Environment Impact Statement (DEIS). The DEIS does not cover some of the crucial points that the OHV community would need answered. Is the Federal Government, Department of the Navy, and United States Marine Corps willing to take on liability for the public in the use of the Restricted Public Access Area (RPAA) and the management of an OHV area? In the management of public lands and specifically Johnson Valley the BLM has stipulations for Special Recreational Permits (SRP) which include specific insurance levels for event holders. For the Marine Corps to get into public land management I believe is a bad idea, especially from a liability perspective. Much of the actual management of the RPAA is not defined in the DEIS and I believe for the government and its people to make an informed decision on the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Land Acquisition that these details need to be worked out. What will the process for permitting RPAA users would be? How would that access permitting be policed? Would there be infrastructure there in Johnson Valley to support the un-informed desert adventurer and

provide them the training and access same day? What would event promoters need to do as far as obtaining a SRP? Would there be fees involved? How would that work if an event was to take place in both the RPAA and the open access area of Cougar Buttes, i.e. as an event promoter would I have to pay both the Marine Corps and the BLM to be able to host that event? What levels and what type of insurance would need to be obtained for the event? Johnson Valley has also supported the filming industry as well, how would those crew members (some being hired on the day of) be permitted use? I have participated in several division level exercises at the combat center that I think would come close to the size of a MEB type “large scale exercise” where, in the Final Exercise (FINEX) the ground force (2-3 Battalions) would assault from the southeast, through multiple corridors, using combined arms and consolidate on a target in the northwestern corner of the Combat Center know as the Sunshine Peak Training Area (TA). I personally have not participated in one of those exercises since the summer of 2003 I have however; been to both Iraq and Afghanistan as part of an Infantry Battalion/Battalion Landing Team. Since then technology and tactics have changed and I accept that it may require more ground to fully exercise those assets. But, as a former member of the MCAGCC Range Control, I know that 1st Marine Division has sent a Special Purpose Marine Air Ground Task Force (SPMAGTF) within the last year to conduct such an exercise (Steel Knight) with over 10,000 troops, just slightly smaller than the exercise force for a MEB exercise. I also understand that the Sunshine Peak TA has been closed to all training units so that aircraft exiting the R2501 airspace can expend any remaining ordnance they have on their craft so they can land safely at their home base. If we require more land to complete our training I think it is the Marine Corps’ responsibility to look inward first. While being assigned to 2d Marine Division we did several long range exercises including some Tactical Exercises Without Troops (TEWTs) hopping from Camp Lejeune through various public lands all the way to Fort A.P. Hill. Whereas the land was only temporarily occupied, this would be the case with a MEBEX, and did not require an increase in infrastructure or any significant cost to the Marine Corps. I think that an alternative of partial public land closure to the public during a MEBEX where the operating force would simply maneuver through public lands would not incur significant cost to the Marine Corps or be a detriment to the public’s recreational opportunities. I believe that if additional land ownership is a requirement of the MEB level exercises it would best be played out as put forth in the DEIS as Alternative 3. I have operated at Fort Bliss which has a similar Main Service Road (MSR) running north/south through the training area that must be closed by unit road guards for unspecified times which is also not too unlike Highway 172 at Camp Lejeune.

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). An Educational Outreach Plan would also be developed under all action alternatives. The Recreation Management Plan would be subject to further analysis and public involvement under NEPA, including soliciting input from the public, BLM, and other agencies. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 323

**Last Name** Conway

**First Name** Ray

**Comment** I am an off road motorcycle enthusiast since 1967. I got my start in motorcycling in the shadow of the 29 palms marine base, as my grandfather had a homestead on bluegrass trail. While I always support the military missions that are assigned by the president. The lose of use of Johnson valley would hurt just the same as the loss of the towers in New York. The very task of protecting the citizenship can not justify takeing the very lands away you are assigned to protect. Th 29 palms base is very large and i would suggest taht the train rules be changed so that the Marines needs can be met on their current lands available Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 324

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a former active duty Marine I agree that the training required is essential for combat operations, But I have seen too much recreation land become off limits to offroad campers, motorcycles and other offroad recreation. The Johnson Valley area is still one of the few places wide open to experience the freedoms which service men of all branches have fought for. The desert is a very large place shrinking on an ongoing basis. Before I would be on board with any additional acquisition of public lands I would like to see the existing lands used more efficiently. We tend to want more without using what we have wisely. Show the maps with the plans before attaching the property and then ask yourselves if this is really what you need!!

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 325

**Last Name** Kief

**First Name** Jerome

**Comment** Let me start by saying I respect all our Military and everything they do for us. My concern is the acquisition of Johnson Valley OHV in California is not taking into account the impact to local economies and the culture of offroad rock crawling. The loss to the offroading community would be dramatic. The Hammers holds the roots of offroad rock crawling. In the midst of many public land closures we are losing places to get out and enjoy our sport. I ask that you please consider other areas for expanding our Military base. I am not in favor of Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California taking over any portion of Johnson Valley OHV.

**Date Comment Received** 3/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a

direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	326
<b>Last Name</b>	Leeming
<b>First Name</b>	Michael
<b>Comment</b>	appricieate letting us comment, but do whatever you need to do to train our troops the best you can and improve their safety. if some of what you do impacts the land, so be it, it will come back.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	3/30/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	327
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	the government already has too much of our land! leave our land alone, if you really want to stop terrorism, close the borders,instead of opening them! stop the illegals from entering our country and exhausting our resources...
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	3/30/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 328

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I fully understand that we need training areas for our troops. Please consider any other area besides the one that has been chosen now. We do not need to train our troops in desert only scenarios. Taking away public land that is used by thousands of people for recreation is not the answer. It is not the ONLY answer! Please reconsider other areas, despite the fact that they maybe in more mountain / forested areas in our nation. Thank you, Armistead Coleman

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comments. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 329

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** with so much open surrounding area, why take the already established? Ohv is one of the last things kids consider "cool" to do w/ their parents. It is a great outlet for families and freinds to spend time and mentor kids. Seems so simple in this case... look east or north for land.

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 330

**Last Name** Schilling

**First Name** Marco

**Comment** Contrary to common belief, off road recreation is an endangered species. With constant attacks from environmental extremist groups, our available riding areas are dwindling to nil. I have to drive 4 hours from San Diego to utilize the Johnson Valley area, and now you are looking at removing that as an option. Is the Marine Corps planning on mitigating this land acquisition by offering up land from one of their other bases? If you fly across this part of the country there appears to be miles and miles of unoccupied desert. It would seem that the U.S. Government, with it's vast mapping, planning and logistical capability would have the resources to find un-utilized land for their training purposes; land that has not had years of effort to turn it into a mecca for off roaders. Many off road groups have volunteered for years to help build Johnson Valley into what it is today- a world recognized off-roading experience. Please do NOT take it away.

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 331

**Last Name** Waite

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** No concerns or issues with proposed expansion. Believe training needs of our armed forces that protect us, defend us and preserve our freedom are far more important than preserving the hand wringing desires of what has become the new religion of extreme environmentalism who, under the guise of saving natural resources for future citizens destroy the economy, impede growth, restrict freedoms and now try to hinder our nations defenders ability to maintain the strength needed to continue to be the best fighting force in the world.

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 332

**Last Name** Morast

**First Name** Bryan

**Comment** This area is not twenty-nine palms it is Johnson Valley. Home to King of the Hammers and dozens of other offroad events every year and one of the few offroad areas left in Southern California. One by one our government and environmental extremists alike take away areas set aside for those of us who chose to enjoy offroad motorsports. I find it very very hard to believe this is the "only" area that could be used for this testing. So I ask; if they are going to close this area down are they going to replace it with another area? Maybe give us the rest of Glamis (Imperial Sand Dunes) back or all of Riverside County or any of the hundreds of other areas closed over the last ten years? If this land is taken now it will never be given back or replaced. Southern California is very limited on open space the public can enjoy as it is and this acquisition will only make matters worse.

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 333

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Although I appreciate the need for this land for Military use, it will take away land currently used by individuals who take their from riding there and for camping adventures.

**Date Comment Received** 3/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 334

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We own 100 Acres in Sec 13, T.5N. R.4E. S.B. B&M. We would like to sell this property, or do something with it. How long are you going to hold us in Limbo? WWII, was less than 4 years long.

**Date Comment Received** 3/31/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. According to the timeline available on the project website <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS>, if one of the

action alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and then approved by Congress, the proposed acquisition of non-federal lands would occur between 2012 and 2014.

**Comment ID** 335

**Last Name** Christie

**First Name** Don

**Comment** I am 70,ridding in he dirt since 1964. Our world is shrinking! Please don't continue this land take as I've come here from the northwest to live and work so as to enjoy JohnsonValley. I ride portions every week and would hate to see any lost! Don Christie DMD

**Date Comment Received** 3/31/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 336

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do NOT remove this valuable motorcycle recreation area from public use. You can probably find some target range land cheap in nearby Mexico.

**Date Comment Received** 3/31/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of

and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 337

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please consider keeping public land open to the public. there are fewer and fewer places for coming generations to go out and explore and enjoy nature and the beauty of the california desert. please help us preserve recreational four wheeling and other motorsports from becoming a thing of the past.

**Date Comment Received** 3/31/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 338

**Last Name** o'meara

**First Name** suzanne

**Comment** i feel this is too much fighting & fighting military plans , where we wish an end to all wars forever. i do not like to have any military doing fighting training in nature . & do not like use of animals or animals getting killed etc in military experiments & training etc. i mean , the navy & military are trained & skilled , they do not need to fight & have weapons at all ; they should just be good emissaries & Intervene & do projects to help people & animals become immortal & develop natural areas into lush paradise / snow mystical places for animals to become enlightened without going through disease/death.

**Date Comment Received** 4/1/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 339

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I am a supporter of our military and understand the need for training, I do not believe that the recreational areas surrounding Twentynine Palms, specifically the Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreational area is an acceptable location. As an avid outdoorsmen, and OHV enthusiast, I make trips each year to that area to recreate with my family. Removing our ability to access this area would have a severe, adverse impact on not only the interaction and dynamic of my family, but also of the local businesses that benefit from monies spent in travel, not just by me, but by ALL users of the area. With legal areas to enjoy a multitude of OHV lifestyles (Single track motorcycles, ATV's & Quads, as well as light duty 4WD vehicles) diminishing at an alarming rate, while the popularity of the hobby is on a rapid INCREASE, I feel that closing this area to recreation will do irreparable harm to an already struggling negative public opinion. Many times in the news you hear about people and children hurt or unfortunately even killed while riding an OHV. By diminishing our areas to legally and safely enjoy our hobby, it will force more people to ride illegally, unmonitored, and trespass in areas that they shouldn't be, contributing to a direct increase in injuries and fatalities. As an American and outdoorsman, I implore that you save the Johnson Valley Recreational area for all of the general public to enjoy. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and

discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 340

**Last Name** Soule

**First Name** Logan

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an amazing place that i thoroughly enjoy, and one of the few places close that i can escape the concrete jungle of orange county. as a college student i am not loaded with cash which makes my travel options limited. This is an amazing place and i would very much like to enjoy it many more times, even if that meant it was off limits for part of the year i would be okay with that, but please do not don't take that away from us adventurers and the people trapped in metropolis. Go America!

**Date Comment Received** 4/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 341

**Last Name** Davidson

**First Name** Roy

**Comment** I am AGAINST expansion of the training area into Johnson Valley. That area is one of the few remaining locations where I can take my family to recreate with our Jeep.

**Date Comment Received** 4/1/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 342

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have worked at China Lake, Fort Irwin NTC and am not sure why you can't train with the Army at NTC. The desert is the desert. If you are going to build realistic training environments, NTC has plenty of established training props. Beat up the desert you currently have and God Bless you for protecting the USA.

**Date Comment Received** 4/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 343

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Just the same as wilderness is hard to change back to various uses, BLM is difficult to close to various uses. Environmentalists know this so through high profile influences they convince military that they need this land. Furthermore, they know they can't win through trail closure but can try and kill an industry that supports it. Take away hard core trails and you take away incentive to build performance products for our sport, then the sport dies. I feel the Johnson Valley closure would be devastating to the enthusiasm of rock crawling as we know it. Just my two cents.

**Date Comment Received** 4/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 344

**Last Name** Bruner

**First Name** James

**Comment** My friends and I have used Johnson Valley for over 15 years as a recreational area for offroad activities. One of the joys of my life is the ability to spend time with my friends and their children from Orange County. Having moved to the Coachella Valley in 1998, these recreational outings are my primary way of staying in contact with friends and watching their kids grow up. I am opposed to any military land expansion that would restrict useage of Johnson Valley for offroad purposes. This includes areas near Boone Rd, Soggy Dry Lake, and Cougar Buttes. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/3/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	345
<b>Last Name</b>	Askew
<b>First Name</b>	Stephen
<b>Comment</b>	Between Fort Irwin and 29 Palms Marine bases the Marines already occupy enough training space. Taking more public land is greedy.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/3/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	346
<b>Last Name</b>	yeager
<b>First Name</b>	steve
<b>Comment</b>	I am all for the marines needing training and am all right if they want to use some of Johnson valley for it 2 months out of the year but to loose some of the public land and trails permanently is not all right. The public is losing land all the time to environmental causes, growth, and other reasons that don't make sense and we are forced to gather in areas unsuitable for the amount of people because there is not enough places to go and recreate. I have been going to Johnson valley for the last 15 years starting with my father and I going and now it's my son and I doing this trip, hopefully I can continue to do this for the rest of my life and my grand children's life too. We need to keep Johnson valley the way it is, open to the public and access to all the trails we already have.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/4/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	347
<b>Last Name</b>	Kennedy
<b>First Name</b>	Jason

**Comment** Yes we need to train our troops. Yes we need land to do this. But you need not to take this land from us The People. There is plenty of land east of Johnson Valley that is more than applicable to host live training. The impact of this would be devastating to the off road community. It would also destroy the lively hood of many business and organizations the depend on the users of this land to generate revenue for their business. I strongly oppose the joint uses of Johnson valley as we would not be able to use this land once live ordinances have been fired. This would be considered a hot zone and would be permanently shut down to the public. ....

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 348

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Alternative 6 looks like the best solution. Please advocate that.

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

## Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS

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**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 349

**Last Name** Nuss

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I do not understand why you don't go to the east of twenty-nine palms? As a veteran, I appreciate the needs of the Corps to train our troops. It's the location that has been selected I have the problem with. The OHV community has had land taken away from us at rate that will leave no where for our kids to ride. If the land is needed, can we atleast get an equal amount of land returned in another area?

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 350

**Last Name** Wood

**First Name** Benjamin

**Comment** I oppose the proposal. The public lands are for public use. They should be used for peaceful, recreational purposes, not to train for war. I am concerned about environmental contamination by elements such as lead and uranium that are used in live-fire exercises. These toxins contaminate the air, soil, and potentially the groundwater. The US is involved in too many wars and there is too much militarism in our society. Expanding training facilities for the Marines will only increase the degree of militarism in our communities, our public lands, our foreign policy, and our society. Enough already!

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. There is no requirement to use depleted uranium rounds in training. The Marine Corps has determined that

Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

**Comment ID** 351

**Last Name** Wood

**First Name** Benjamin

**Comment** I would like to know how many people submitted comments, how many opposed, and how many were in favor of the proposal, and how the Marine Corps took the public's opinion into consideration. I am requesting that this information be sent to me as soon as it is available.

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** The public comments received and the Marine Corps response to each of the comments is contained as an Appendix to the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 352

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I support the training of the marines, the land proposed to be taken over is great off-roading land with several difficult trails and I would hate to lose access to that land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 353

**Last Name** Dexter

**First Name** Gregory

**Comment** Please do not close the Johnson Valley area, as I enjoy going there with friends and family to camp and explore the desert there. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 354

**Last Name** Heiden

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** My family and I have been visiting the Johnson Valley area for over 30 years for recreational and leisure purposes. We shop at stores in Yucca Valley, Twentynine Palms, Landers and Barstow, enjoy riding and driving in the OHV area, attend desert races and explore the desert around our cabin in Landers. We have invested approx. \$100,000 in vehicles including ATV's, tow vehicle, trailer and jeep in order to enjoy the public lands. We respectfully urge that the Marine Corp. select any option for expansion that does not impact the Johnson Valley OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/6/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 355

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a proud supporter of the Military in general. Having said that, I feel that the use of the Johnson Valley area is too close to populated areas for the purpose of live fire exercises. My family does use the area for off road family vacations. We have had wonderful family time there, and to be moved from there would hurt us a great deal! I am familiar with the area around the 29 Palms base and to move your exercises to the North and East towards Amboy and into the wilderness to the east would seem like a more realistic move. I live less than 20 miles from the Johnson Valley area, and I am also concerned that the exercise may impact the quality of life at home also. Another suggestion I have is to investigate the possibility of moving the area to the north to connect with the Fort Irwin exercise area. It seems that joint exercises would be a more viable training option. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this topic. I am a proud American. I believe in our Fighting Men and Women and their Families! I want the USMC to Fight as they train. I am just hoping that the government will consider other options other than taking away our recreational space! Thank you!

**Date Comment Received** 4/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 356

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to voice my concern for the public losing access to Johnson Valley and KOH 4x4 areas due to the proposed land acquisition. As a responsible outdoor enthusiast I would hope there would be a shared use agreement that would allow for public activities on this land when not being used by the military. As a 4x4, motorcycle and hiking enthusiast, it pains me to see the beautiful areas of American taken away from the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 357

**Last Name** Winzenried

**First Name** Joseph

**Comment** Regarding the USMC expansion at the 29 palms base. I really would like to say that while I am in full support of our troops especially our USMC, I am not in support of expanding the base into Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley is one of the greatest OHV areas in the US today. Every year this place generates a lot of money for our economy, Just this last February it brought thousands of dollars to our local businesses from the King of the Hammers event. They said over 70k people where there for up to as long as 3 weeks. This brought thousands of dollars for the BLM as well. Many of of have been taking our friend and family's to JV for years and would love

to continue to do so. Please reconsider this and look into building a new training area some where else, maybe somewhere away from the general public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/9/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 358

**Last Name** Lennon

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** I am a Johnson Valley land owner and have been a user of the Johnson Valley OHV area for almost 20 years. While I fully support the Marine Corps and their need for large scale combined arms live fire training I believe that alternative six is unreasonable both in it's closure of the majority of the OHV area and it's impacts on local landowners. This is especially true as the Marine Corps states that exercises that will only be conducted about 60 days a year. As a landowner, alternative six will cause my property value to be diminished to almost zero. We CAN hear noise from current training (including aircraft and artillery.) Should the training objective be practically on my doorstep in the west there WILL be noise and dust and any potential buyer of the property will know it. As I plan to retire on my property, I do not relish the thought of aircraft, artillery, and small arms fire going on for days during an exercise while I attempt to enjoy my retirement. As a user of the OHV area, the plan is equally worse. The preferred alternative cuts off access to one of the premier off-road recreation areas in the western United States. Rock-crawling at the Hammers is not all the area is used for. The plan will end off-road races (including The King of the Hammers and others) and put an end numerous other organized events. However this isn't as important as the fact that it will stop thousands of people from just going out and playing in the dirt and enjoying the outdoors on our PUBLIC lands. I implore the Department of the Navy to consider these facts and if Johnson Valley MUST be used for this purpose (as opposed to unoccupied areas in the middle of Nevada) that they select an alternative that allows FULL USE of the Johnson Valley OHV area when training is not going on (10 months of the year) AND requires that live fire occur only within the present Twentynine Palms base.

**Date Comment Received** 4/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. The EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 359

**Last Name** Vanderpool

**First Name** Chuck

**Comment** I'm a Northern California resident that has wheeled the hammers since there inception. I make the trek there twice a year and enjoy the wheeling immensely. It's such a shame when politics intervene in decision making that takes away public lands and personal freedoms. I guess it's the times we live in, but don't have to like. This off road park should be left to the outdoor use people and the Marine base can be expanded to the other side of the valley. That way no one is impacted. I'm a Viet Nam vet and completely support our military. However when lobbying groups and politicians play games with our freedoms, I have to draw the line there. Please make all considerations when making your decision to impact our offroad park. Sincerely, Chuck Vanderpool Also consider the impact to local business that will occur based on your decision.

**Date Comment Received** 4/10/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 360

**Last Name** Volpe II

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** DO NOT ADD ANY MORE LAND TO YOUR MILITARY BASE

**Date Comment Received** 4/10/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 361

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** Wow... we were lied to! Yes back in the seventy's when BLM took 10's of thousands of acres away from motorized recreation use with the original Desert Protection Act. We (motorized public) were told that the OHV areas that were provided were NEVER to be taken away? Very sad.....

**Date Comment Received** 4/11/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 362

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** I am not convinced that we cant train our troops with what we have now! I read the reasons BUT it seems very weak. If the training was modified to use what is in place Im sure the objectives could be met. The Marines have

some very smart folks along with private contractors to come up with a modified training program. I WILL HELP (for FREE), I have a very good field training background from decades of live fire (wild fire) training, Give me a shot at it..... D O U G A N D E R S O N

**Date Comment Received** 4/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 363

**Last Name** Gonzalez

**First Name** Manuel

**Comment** As an avid offroader and a supporter of the military with many members of my family currently serving I have to object to an expansion into the Johnson Valley area. A large part of our areas for family recreation are being closed and contested by tree huggers. Now the military wants to take land from us. We pay taxes and land use fees to keep areas open. the military needs to use an alternate site.

**Date Comment Received** 4/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 364

**Last Name** Kauffman

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** As a long time user of the Johnson Valley, Means Dry Lake area, I find it appalling that the military is trying to take it over. There is so much land not being used to the North and East that can be used for the military's purposes. I am a veteran and I understand that training is key, and support the military in every way. But again, there are other options not being considered here and I wonder why that is. Having said that, I suspect this will move forward no matter how many civilian users of the area speak up, so we need to figure out how best to land on some common ground. Obviously the feed back from the offroad community has not been as loud and outspoken as it needs to be, and I plan to help change that. I do not want to see the Johnson Valley area taken over by the military enve if the promise of continued recreational use is given. We all know how the government backs it promises these days. I have attended three meetings and will be a several more. I voice my opinion that the Military needs to seek other avenues and leave the johnson Valley area as it is. Byt the time the decision is made to take over the area it won't be needed for training anymore and massive amounts of money will be lost to the local community and spent needlessly by the miliatry. My tax dollars by the way. I say NO! NO ! NO!to this adventure. Stop it now. You don't need this land, it is a land grab by Fienstien and that is all it is. PERIOD! My tax money pays your salaries, and I served my time in the military so listen to me and others like me. Leaqve our recreation alone. Thank you very much, kurt kauffman

**Date Comment Received** 4/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live- fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-

sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 365

**Last Name** Riley

**First Name** Patricia

**Comment** We live and work in Johnson Valley. We have invested our life savings in our home. we are but 3 miles from Means Dry Lake. Our home will be severely damaged if you start bombing over there. Are you going to pay to repair our damages? Can you not go East? No one lives over there, so less people will be affected by your training exercises. We haven't even seen all the historic sites you may very well destroy, including old 1940's bomb targets, petroglyphs, historic mining sites. We have invest in quads that cost us \$10,000 to explore our desert. Please don't take this away from us. thank you for your time, Patricia

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 366

**Last Name** Gerdsen

**First Name** Garrett

**Comment** My brother, cousin and I all flew up to California from Louisiana to attend the 2011 King of the Hammers race in Johnson Valley. In total we stayed 9 nights up on Big Bear mountain and really appreciated the nature out there. This was the best trip we've ever had and will never be forgotten. Public lands like this should be kept open to the public. I'm a big supporter of our

military and a proud US citizen. I am not, however in support of expanding the 29 Palms facility into current public land and or parks. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 367

**Last Name** Welch

**First Name** Shannon

**Comment** This land is regularly used by the offroad community. The current expansion plan would involve sharing this land 10 months out of the year with the community. However, if this land is going to be used for battleground testing 2 months out of the year and used by the general public 10 months out of the year, there is a huge chance for the general population to encounter left behind ammunition or dangerous scenarios that weren't entirely cleaned up after the marines used the land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. The Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

**Comment ID** 368

**Last Name** chamberlain

**First Name** paul

**Comment** look for an alternate venue. the land is more useable by remaining open for public use. the state of california has the largest off road populations and johnson valley is one of the largest open areas to recreate.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 369

**Last Name** chamberlain

**First Name** joe

**Comment** look for an alternate. is such a large area actually needed? do they engage in this type of combat still to need that amount of land for three battalions?

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. as discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In

November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 370

**Last Name** Book

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I have been riding in the desert for the last 15yrs. Our area is getting smaller and smaller. It is getting more and more crowded and will put more people in danger. There are millions of acres of desert and you want the little peices that we have to ride in for you to drop bombs, lead and brass casings in. What about going to the East? or how about Arizona? Thank You for giving us a chance to speak up.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 371

**Last Name** Walton

**First Name** Karen

**Comment** The Marines need to train and to do so, they should be allowed all the space they need. At the same time, don't take the land in Johnson Valley because that is the only place ORV enthusiasts can ride. Thank you and good luck.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 372

**Last Name** Parker

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** I must admit, I'm highly disappointed, but not surprised on the direction the military is going with this JV land grab. I feel the decision has been made well before this has become public several years ago. Last I knew, we live in the Land of the Free. And I know Freedom comes with a price. I honor all those who put their lives on the line to protect our Freedom(s). One of those freedoms is our Public Lands, and how we use them. JV BLM has so many uses, to name them all. And one of the most important uses to my family is the Designation of Off Highway Vehicle Use. My family enjoys what JV has to offer, especially being it's location and close proximity to the masses. Losing this area will have a huge negative impact on countless facets. To name just a few of many negative impacts, family recreation is compromised. Where else can we play with our families as we do here in JV, especially being it's location is near to millions. If we lose this public treasure, the expense to travel to lesser quality locations will be impossible to achieve, especially with the ever so high cost of travel. We personally cannot justify the severely added expense to the much farther, lesser quality locations. Therefore, we will forego and sell off our off-highway vehicles, such as two rock-crawlers, toy-hauler, amongst a few other accessories. Another huge impact will be to the local communities. Such as financially. I know the local communities have claimed their selves as Stakeholders in the process. I personally sat in on a few of their meetings of which is obvious they want the JV Land to remain as is for a multitude of valid reasons. I could only hope that JV will remain as is. But I strongly have my doubts. And if you give us the "Joint Use" condition, I see major potential

problems. One being you have full control on use, and we have none. However, if we the people have full control, and the "Joint Use" would be a permit only as anyone else. My fear is that once you have "Joint Use" control, I can see the scenario play out whereas while under your use, let's say one of your vehicles cannot account for a box of miscellaneous ordinances or such. Then it'd be easy to say the area is now off limits to all general public till the missing ordinances are accounted for. I personally do not like the idea of you guys holding the keys to our beloved OHV area. But if the general public has the keys, I'd feel a bit easier about who has control. Thank you, Steve Parker and Family

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 373

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider moving the training area further east. It would be safer for the general public if you moved training further east rather than closer to the population. It is also very disheartening to me that I have spent my entire life enjoying the public lands of Johnson Valley and have spent most of that time taking care of this land. The idea of this land being blown apart after I have made a painstaking effort to clean this land just breaks my heart. The state of California has such few areas remaining for open desert camping. Please do not take this land. I understand the need and importance of training the military but employ you to take the training further east. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 374

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please DO NOT take away our public lands in such a way that impacts the Lucerne Valley Communities economics as well as depreciating our private property in Johnson Valley. The airspace around and over our airstrip 7CA1 appears to be severely restricted therefore making our strips unusable! Go East and or South of 29 Palms, please! If you take our airspace, you then shall buy our land!

**Date Comment Received** 4/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps is sensitive to the potential effects the airspace proposals could have on commercial, business, and general aviation activities and will seek means to accommodate those interests to the greatest extent possible while also striving to meet their

flight training requirements. The airspace proposals will be examined in depth by the FAA and any measures required to mitigate impacts will be discussed with the Marine Corps, airport operators, and other aviation interests, as appropriate. The FAA outlines procedures for public use airports within boundaries of restricted airspace, these procedures will be followed for all airspace proposals. Marine Corps representatives will continue to maintain outreach programs to the civil aviation community to discuss their aviation requirements and those options that will best serve all interest in sharing use of the Combat Center airspace. The location of your particular airstrip will be taken into consideration for boundary revisions throughout the NEPA and FAA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	375
<b>Last Name</b>	Lyons
<b>First Name</b>	Marcus
<b>Comment</b>	I think it's awesome that the Marines want to acquire this land. Training is needed and can't be done just anywhere, twenty-nine palms is an excellent location for joint operations training. Some will complain about not being able to ride dirt bikes and ATV's but they should realise that what you all do does not come easy. Being able to execute large scale ground and air manoeuvres requires training area large enough to support the mission.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/12/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	376
<b>Last Name</b>	mcentire
<b>First Name</b>	jeff
<b>Comment</b>	I own property in wonder valley outside the area but within the area affected. I don't believe that the expansion is needed at all. I vote no on all proposals!
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/12/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 377

**Last Name** McKain

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Please don't close Johnson Valley (JV) to off roaders. Off roading in J.V. is a favorite past time to many Southern California off roaders/tax payers. This would require us to drive further to good riding areas which which is already a burden with \$4+ per gallon gas. There is plenty of land near 29 Palms where the Military can train.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 378

**Last Name** Filbin

**First Name** Adam

**Comment**

I understand the need for our military to train and to protect our country, however i feel taking land that was designated to the pubic as a poor choice. The open BLM,OHV land is growing smaller and smaller each year which cause more accidents as areas become overcrowded. I propose that if land is being taken away that we get land back in other areas so adventure groups still have places to recreate. Also i believe taking this land away from the public will greatly affect the entire high desert community as it will greatly diminish income from outside travelers to the commmunities that depend on our money. In the end i dont see how the military taking tons of land in the hopes of protecting the US freedom is really protecting the freedom at all. It seems as if its killing our open land and free rights to use that land, killing the cities and peoples lifestyles in those areas which are being taken over, and ultimately causing more harm then i see is giving back to the country. During a time while the nation has an all time low moral for the gov. based on horrible economy, high unemployment rates, sending troops to remote countries that most people feel we shouldnt be in, why cause more problems by taking away thier free land as well. In the end I hope a common agreemnt can be made that benefits all parties involved instead of a push and grab where the hard working outdoor people end up loosing everything without getting anything in return.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. Public input becomes part of the Final EIS and will be considered by the Department of the Navy during its decision

process. Consideration of national budget and other similar issues is outside the scope of a NEPA analysis. The EIS findings are one of many types of information that decision-makers will consider. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID**

379

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Please do not close or take away any of the Johnson Valley OHV area. Please go EAST. We already dont have enough areas to ride on. It has slowly been taken away from us. It would also hurt the local economy by eliminating the money spent in the area. This is one of the ONLY spots left in Socal to ride and race. Environmentalist are killing the family recreation of OHV use and now another entity wants to really make it hard for us to ride legally. Please consider another area. If we had more places to ride it wouldnt be so bad but we dont. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received**

4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

380

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Give the Marines the land. Once a Marine always a Marine

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 381

**Last Name** gotte

**First Name** winston

**Comment** i take my kids to johnson valley once a month year round.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 382

**Last Name** Welch

**First Name** Carrie

**Comment** Please leave the OHV lands alone. This land means a lot to off roaders and their families. My sister and I bond over the time we are off roading. We don't see each other a lot since I live in NY and she lives in CA, but when I do get out there its important to be able to spend that quality time together. My younger sister and father travel to CA every year to do the same thing. These lands aren't just important to CA residents they are important to people from all over the country, I think its even safe to say, the world. I implore you to please find an alternative to the OHV land. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public

scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 383

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My business depends on race and rock crawling events, with the main focus being the in the Johnson Valley Area. As a business we supply printing to the events, vendors, and teams that participate at these events. Even more important is the time that I have with family and friends in the area. Keep public lands open to the public please.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 384

**Last Name** Dorer

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** Do not restrict a sport in this historical wheeling area. This is a great outdoors area for the family and friends to come together and enjoy mother nature at her finest! This is one of the trips i planned to make when i get out of college. PLEASE PLEASE dont destroy the dream of others and myself!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 385

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a fan of the JV recreational area and have traveled there from Georgia to numerous events and for recreational purposes. Please consider keeping this land open to the public for public use. Our ability to enjoy the few areas of the country with this type of incredible scenery and terrain diminishes daily. Our amazing and honorable military sacrifices to protect our freedoms. We appreciate this and ask that our freedom to enjoy Johnson Valley be maintained. Thanks- Adam Atlanta, Georgia

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 386

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** OHV areas need to stay open and Johnson Valley is a prime example of this. Removing our access to this land would be a shame considering we as adventuresome individuals and families have very few places left to enjoy anyway.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 387

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley Off Road area is a very special place to me and my family. This is a place we go to spend time together and "bond" with my son. To take this place away from us, as well as from the thousands of other people that call this place their sanctuary can not be allowed. Every day, more and more trails are being closed to the public. PLease leave this off road mecca alone, and let my kids enjoy the great outdoors like I have been able to.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 388

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The hammers have been a long standing ORV and 4x4 attraction and taking it away from the people now would just be insane. Many people travel each year to this place as a vacation destination for outdoor activities. Many of us have not been able to acquire funds to make the trek but would like the

opportunity to do so in the future. I am fully opposed to the land grab and wish for the hammers in Johnson Valley to remain a public use and access site. Public disapproval has been shown before rallied by Pirate4x4.com and all of us who are members of the site are still opposed to the land grab. Thanks for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 389

**Last Name** prock

**First Name** Lewis

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is the last of it's kind. No where in the country can you experience the different terrain in one area. To close Johnson Valley and use as a bombing range or anything other than a recreation area would be a shame.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 390

**Last Name** Price

**First Name** Dylan

**Comment** Avid offroaders from all over the world hold Johnson Valley in the highest regard as one of the absolute best OHV areas in existence. It came as a huge blow to us to hear that the USMC was looking to purchase a large portion of the area. I'm sure I speak for everyone when I express my gratitude for your willingness to revisit the topic. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 391

**Last Name** Harrington

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** While I fully support the US military, I feel that the expansion of 29 Palms would have a very negative impact on a growing hobby. Tens of thousands of people take pleasure in recreating at the "Hammers" and make use of all it has to offer. Even though I live on the other side of the country, I have friends who have been to Johnson Valley, and tell me that it is a wonderful place. I hope to have the opportunity to travel out there someday, and make use of what it has to offer. The expansion of 29 Palms would have a detrimental impact on a very quickly growing sport. A sport which has a huge impact on the OHV community and economy. I hope that an agreement can be reached to preserve Johnson Valley for future OHV use and recreation. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will

be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 392

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave the Hammers a lone. It is a great off highway vehicle area. I have enjoyed it for years and hope to enjoy it for many more. I fully support our troops (well I guess not on this) and appreciate the sacrifice everyone of our service members do for our country! Thank you!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 393

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I wish to see Johnson Valley remain in its current state as a public recreational area which allows motorized use. Such areas are becoming increasingly rare and Johnson Valley allows an outlet for those who enjoy such hobbies.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 394

**Last Name** Mitchell

**First Name** Jayson

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an important area to the off-road community and should be free to use by the public. It has become one of the most popular OHV areas in the country. People travel literally thousands of miles for the KOH event there. Why take all that revenue away from the state???

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 395

**Last Name** Laughrin

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** I would like the Marines to reconsider the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area. There are a lot of people that use the area that spend money in local stores near by as well as other areas on trips to and from there. I am planning a trip for next year to this area and will be spending decent money to get there as well as once I'm in the area. Craig Laughrin

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 396

**Last Name** Foli

**First Name** John

**Comment** Please maintain the use of recreational areas to the public! These areas are diminishing and eliminating the useful beauty of our country!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 397

**Last Name** Gannan

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** 2011 was the first I attended the King of the Hammers. My visit pumped close to \$1000 into the local community between food, lodging, and rental. The USMC has the ability to use land that is further North and East no problem. Thanks for your time. Matt

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 398

**Last Name** Foxx

**First Name** Jonathan

**Comment** Even though I am a good distance from this OHV park, it still means a lot to me that it stays open. If this OHV park closes down, whats next? Another area that is closer to my home that I may potentially get to visit, or maybe one that I currently travel to today. Keeping OHV parks open all across the United States is very important to me as well as my fellow wheelers across this great nation

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 399

**Last Name** Hornung

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open; it is one of the top offroading places in the region, enjoyed by thousands of people every year with minimal environmental impact. Closure would result in even more crowding in the few other remaining OHV areas. Please keep public lands open for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-

making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 400

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley has been a primary destination for me and my family for years. I have fond memories of off roading with my family in the Southern California desert, including Johnson Valley, for almost all of the 40 years I have been here. My father passed away a bit over a year ago and not being able to enjoy the desert with him is one of the things I miss the most. Now that I have a family of my own I want to be able to continue to give them the long lasting memories I have of the desert and my family. Please do not deny us of this. Johnson Valley is a unique area that offers a wide variety of adventures. Protecting it as a destination for families should be paramount.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 401

**Last Name** Ruggiero

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** This land in southern California mean a lot to the community of offroading and should stay open as an OHV park. We drive across the country 3 to 4 times a year just to enjoy Johnson valley beautiful terrain. This land has a major impact on the business's in Yucca valley. The revenue that business receive would not be the same if this public land closes down.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 402

**Last Name** Maskalans

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I understand the need for expanded training grounds, but the area known as The Hammers provides recreational opportunities unlike any other nationwide. The rock crawling and Ultra4 racing specifically is what brings me, and many others even further east than I am, to The Hammers. Please let this area remain open to the public, for recreational motorsport use. -- Michael Maskalans Fingerlakes 4x4 Member-At-Large Codriver, Game Day Racing #571

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the

final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 403

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley, has been an amazing place to me. I have been only a few times, but everytime I have gone I've encountered amazing things, I've met many wonderful people, and I've pushed my vehicle to do more technical and more fun four wheeling than I can offer it in northeastern Nevada. Our sport is all about progression. Without progression there is zero point to continue. I've watched my vehicle as well as my fabrication/welding skills explode throughout the time i've been in this sport. With that said, Ive also seen Johnson Valley explode to one of if not the most progressive OHV location in the world. It means a lot t a lot of people. My 3 year old neice keeps asking when we're going back to Johnson Valley. She has been one time and it has impacted and influenced her life as well as mine. I understand the need for land for Military use. I respect every decision made. And I appreciate everything the Military has done and goes through to protect this country and allow me to post comments and go four wheeling with family and friends. Thank you for all of the service. And please remember Johnson Valley is an amazing place to a lot of people. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 404

**Last Name** Davies

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** Last years KOH was my first time to Johnson valley . I hope i can do it again. What a awsome place and awsome people. i hate to drive 28 hrs again and not be able to play on the trails i came for. Brian

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 405

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing this comment on behalf of my family and my close friends that are involved in off-road recreation. I am from Northern California and I have family from other states that travel to Johnson Valley OHV Park annually to vacation and to be a park in the greatest off-highway race in the USA. By the Marines wanting to take over this land area, it will force the greatest race and a naturally awesome off-highway location to disappear. I am a Hugh supporter of all the armed forces and all of our troops. Many of my friends and family have and do serve our great country and they are also very involved in the off-highway recreation. Please do not close down to the public one of our greatest locations. God Bless Our Troops. Thank you, Andrew Wilder

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 406

**Last Name** Jeglinski

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** i have a cousin overseas as a army ranger, several friends in the reserves, several co workers are nam and gulf vets, let public land be open to the public keep up the good work everyone in all branches of the military

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 407

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to OHV. It is an important part of the sport and would be a devastating loss to the offroading community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 408

**Last Name** Carpenter

**First Name** Travis

**Comment** As an avid OHV user and a tax payer, I feel that clousure of any more public land is just flat stupid. I don't understand why other locations cannot be used? It seems dumb to shut down the one place where so many people recreate! I encourage you to explore other options! Thanks you!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 409

**Last Name** Perchaluk

**First Name** Brett

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open - I am planning a driving trip from Canada to enjoy the area, as it is unique in many ways.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 410

**Last Name** Romero

**First Name** Paul Daniel

**Comment** Been building a rock crawler for the past few years. Was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan for the past couple KOH events and would like the opportunity to go to one in the future!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 411

**Last Name** Tauber

**First Name** James

**Comment** As you can see Johnson Valley does not only affect enthusiasts from the region itself but those of us from across the country. Every bout and battle to enjoy our great outdoors does need to be preserved in a manner of activities that I like others to pursue in the form of OHV. I grew up in the BLM area managements of Las Vegas and find some of my greatest times where had during OHV activities. I don't get the same joy here on the eastern seaboard and it is not the same being subject to foot trails. Treading lightly is of ut most importance and packing out what you packed in but there are many hidden wonders in the vast trail system that myself and others enjoy and are not realistically accessible by foot on a holiday.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 412

**Last Name** Bartlett

**First Name** Harrison

**Comment** I have noticed that the areas remaining open to 4x4 usage is slowly dwindling to nothing. It is crucial that we keep these areas open and accessible to the public. Less and less lands are currently being allowed for public use, and one day I fear that my future children will not be able to enjoy America as I have. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 413

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep public lands open to the public. This area is to much of a treasure to the offroad community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 414

**Last Name** PAGE

**First Name** HENRY

**Comment** to whom it may concern, regarding J.V. ohv area. the money brought in to the area would be missed from merchants. If said area is closed to the off highway people. the grunts could picko meadows in lew of j.v.. our sport is loosing more ground each year,please give us a break..thanks .son of a CHINA MARINE.....

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 415

**Last Name** BOUNDS

**First Name** RICHARD

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT TAKE ANY MORE LAND AWAY FROM US. ME AND MY FAMILY SPEND ALOT OF TIME THERE

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 416

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave the Johnson Valley ORV area available to the offroad community. I live in Washington state and have traveled there as a destination for there is nothing like "the Hammers" here. Thank you for leaving that area accessible. Thomas McHugh

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 417

**Last Name** Gunderman

**First Name** Shad

**Comment** Dear USMC- Let me start by saying THANK YOU for protecting our county and all that it stands for. With that said, please rethink your approach at taking away a large chunk of Johnson Valley OHV. I grew up in So Cal and own property in Newberry Springs. My parents took me to the desert every other weekend to explore. As a child, I remember sitting next to the fire at night listening to the bombing practice over the mountains. I also remember my father taking me over the hills and showing the bomb craters....I was amazed. Now that my father has passed, and I have a two year old son, I want to raise him in a very similar fassion. I want to teach him how great of a country we live in, our freedoms, our liberty. Johnson Valley OHV is such a wonderful place for families to gather, from all walks of life, to make memories that last a lifetime. Off-roading is such an awesome hobby...one that keeps our children interested in something family oriented, and keeps them away from such harmful passtimes, such as drugs, premarital sex and violence. Please listen to all

that ask you to reconsider your options. From what I have read, the USMC is open-minded to the many civilain requests...please keep it that way. I know my argument may not be as strong as others, but I still felt it necessary to express it. Thank you very much for taking the time to hear me. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 418

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley Open as a OHV park. not only does it offer a place for many californians to enjoy the outdoors but many people from all over the country travel great distances just to experience all that this wonderful park has to offer. the KOH is held here every year with hundreds of people competing in a sport that they love. please dont take that away from all of us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 419

**Last Name** Patterson

**First Name** Garth

**Comment** Please keep land open and available to off road vehicle use. It helps protect other land and can be a revenue source for local businesses.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 420

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** the possible closure of this area is a tragedy. this area is located away from suburbia and is managed properly and safely. closing it would mean a change in lifestyle for countless families and off road enthusiasts. i've traveled across the country several times to attend events at johnson. while doing so i've also spent thousands of dollars in the local economy. please leave this area along as off road areas are becoming harder to access everyday.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 421

**Last Name** Terry

**First Name** Branndon

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley and the Hammers open to the public. Too much land is being closed by the government and this area is especially important to outdoor enthusiasts and off-roading.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (such as the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 422

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We go to the Johnson Valley OHV a couple times a year from Northern California. It is one of the last pristine, hard core off roading spots we have left in CA. I am hoping you will take this into consideration and look to expand in a different direction.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were

considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 423

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** to me, johnson valley is the quintessential embodiment of freedom and nature. it is a premier offroad attraction, the host of thee most iconic offroad race, and a huge draw for revenue in this downed economy. king of the hammers is epic, and keeps getting bigger and bigger. it draws in a lot of revenue for many offroad parts suppliers, small business fabrication shops, fuel, food, advertisement..... and above all that, its quality open space, protected from the spread of society. please dont take johnson valley away, it is a bucket list destination for me, my family, and a lot of my friends! thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS

and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 424

**Last Name** Szego

**First Name** Ted

**Comment** I travel from VA to Johnson Valley every year to enjoy what is some of the best 4 wheeling in the country as well as help with the King of the Hammers race. I would be very sad to see it closed. This is an area that is extremely important to the OHV community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 425

**Last Name** valdez

**First Name** don

**Comment** Let start off by saying that i have the highest regard for our military, We as a nation are losing more and more places for those of us that love the outdoors, I am now 50yrs old and i have the greatest memories of being camping,hunting,fishing but most of all four wheeling, i want the same memories for my wife and kids. Please keep this land open to all to enjoy. Thank you Don Valdez

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 426

**Last Name** Morgan

**First Name** Tyler

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open for public use. It's a great vacation spot and one of the few remaining open areas for 4 wheeling in the US.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 427

**Last Name** genaw

**First Name** aric

**Comment** as an avid OHV enthusiast i feel that the takeover of the Hammers for marine use is definitely not necessary and surely not the only option of the marine corp. it would be hugely disappointing for the gov't to take more public land for its own selfishness. there are many other areas that are not used like the Johnson Valley area. the marines need to make a intelligent decision and leave the Hammers and Johnson valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 428

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLease leave the johnson valley ORV area open to the public I'm 1300 miles from the hammer trails And I travel down once a year to enjoy them. In a time where we (ORV community) area losing ORV area's please please leave this area open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within

specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 429

**Last Name** Blunt

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Please do us folks out in Johnson Valley a favor. Head east young men. Head east.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 430

**Last Name** vega

**First Name** Raul

**Comment** please keep johnson valley open!! i love that place

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 431

**Last Name** Scutellaro

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public. My family loves coming out the from Illinois every year to enjoy rock crawling and the beautiful weather. This would be a real shame to lose suck a wonderful place that we all can use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 432

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Please reconsider expanding the Marine Base into the proposed area of the Means Dry Lakebed.. a.k.a. The Hammers OHV Area. My family and I have been coming here for recreation for many years, it's a long drive from where I live, but well worth it. We love this area for it's variety of terrain and land features found nowhere else in southern california. Each year public land is taken away, thus forcing us into smaller areas. Increased traffic in these other areas causes accidents, increases stress to plants and animals that call these areas home. I would hope that other options for the Marines exist. I support our Men and Women in the Armed Forces in our Fight for Freedom. God Bless America. Thank You, Mike Baker

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 433

**Last Name** Bunker

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** Regarding the Johnson Valley ohv area: Ive been 4wheeling for 18 years. Since the very start of it I have heard of 'The hammers'. The holy grail of hardcore 4wheeling. I was scared of the place, I went everywhere in washington and got tired of it all. Finally in January of '09 i came down for the king of the hammers race. I drove 1250 miles one way to come there. I was not dissappointed. Incredible scenery, Simply awesome trails and views, Smells and sensations. It is simply a special place to be for me and soo many others like i am. As you know the King of the hammers race has garnered many followers, For me it marks the only vacation i take every year. To have this incredible area closed to us would be heartbreaking. Please reconsider your expansion and consider all of the folks like myself who are passionate for the area we call 'The Hammers'

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 434

**Last Name** Moss

**First Name** Andrew

**Comment** SAVE THE HAMMERS!!!!!!!!!! It would truly be a shame to lose access to such a famed OHV area and home of one of the most innovative and ground breaking off road races in history. I SUPPORT THE USMC COMPLETELY and I know there are a great many of our Proud Marines that love OHVs and getting outdoors and offroad in this exact area. Please consider our sport and our comments as you explore other options and opportunities. Sincerely, Andy Moss

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 435

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a former Marine and an avid Off Road enthusiast I understand the need for acquiring land for use but think that some type of public and sanctioned events must still be allowed in the Johnson Valley area. This is a huge recreational area in the off road community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 436

**Last Name** Baum

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** I would really appreciate the USMC looking somewhere else to expand the military base. As i am aware of the land that is needed to train our military personal and fully support the military as well i enjoy the Johnson Valley OHV area several times a year. I compete in the King of Hammers race for the last two years and hope to continue to be able to compete in the race for many more years. It is also a place that I have enjoyed with my family and hope one day my kids can enjoy with their children as well. It is one place that has a lot to offer many types of different off-road activities and I know myself and family enjoy being able to ride atv's and drive off-road vehicles in Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 437

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I just wanted to say that as an out of state wheeling enthusiast Johnson Valley is a dream to me. I came out in 2010 for the King of the Hammers and I came back with a passion to wheel in a place as awesome of the "Hammers". The place is irreplaceable to me. It is a bit of heaven on earth to me and people like me. Thanks, Gary Lawson Houston, TX

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 438

**Last Name** Park

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Means Dry Lake has become a meeting place for thousands of families not only in southern california, but all over the nation. A gathering place where families can camp out and do their off-road adventures. This last February the lake bed was host to around 40,000 people for a week and that is not the only time of the year that folks gather there. Almost every weekend hundreds of people spend quality time together. What this means to the local economy is outstanding !!! what better place to raise kids and show them how to enjoy and respect the out- of-doors !

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 439

**Last Name** Katz

**First Name** Jesse

**Comment** Appreciate the service of everyone in our armed forces and want them to have everything they need to do their jobs, but would hate to lose access to this area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 440

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave this land for public use!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 441

**Last Name** Cochran

**First Name** L. Todd

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley for many years. I consider the "Hammer" trails to be irreplaceable. This is one of my favorite off-roading destinations and I hope everything possible is being done to keep this land open for off-highway vehicle recreation for future generations. L. Todd Cochran, DDS

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 442

**Last Name** Whitford

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** As a big supporter of our Armed Forces, I know how important it is that the Marine's expand and become as strong as possible for our safety and freedom, however the Johnson Valley OHV area is one of those freedoms that we enjoy all year long. Please take a long hard look at all other possibilities for expansion, and leave the OHV area alone. This is a place we go with our families to recreate, and enjoy the freedoms that the Marines help to keep for us. I'm sure for most people the Johnson Valley OHV area make just be another piece of the Southern California desert, but for thousands of us, it is a great place to spend our time with friends and family. Please do not take it away.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 443

**Last Name** cannon

**First Name** chad

**Comment** Please leave Johnson valley as an OHV area. For the past 4 years I have enjoyed getting my family together and spending a week getting closer to them in the california desert. There are few places left where we can go to enjoy motorized recreation. Johnson valley is truly unique and needs to be kept open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 444

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please allow offroading to continue at Johnson Valley. As areas to go offroad continue to shrink, this is one place that I hope stays around for

years to come. Some day I hope to be able to bring my children to this offroad mecca that they too might enjoy it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 445

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To my military friends, I have been riding and racing in Johnson Valley for the last 20 years. I taught my son to ride off Boone Road. In my opinion Johnson Valley is one of the last purest desert OHV areas. My family loves camping there with our friends. It would be a shame to lose this riding area. I hope to teach my grandson to ride bikes there someday. Don't make me a grumpy old man, let's work together to keep open our beloved riding areas. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 446

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley sense the late 70's with my parents. I now go with my kids and my parents still go out there with use. This is part of what our family is and does. Most of my family has served and we understand the importance of what you guys do. I just ask that you please leave use this very small peice of land that many families like mine use and enjoy. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 447

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open as an OHV park. This land is legendary for offroad activities. I have not yet been, but from the pictures and videos I have seen, it is a mut-do in my lifetime. Our available spaces for off-roading are rapidly shrinking, and this is one of the best places still open. Again, please consider that closing this area will affect people from all over the country. Respectfully.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 448

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a Military member, I understand the need for training grounds. But as an OHV enthusiast, we also need room for us to enjoy our sport. Whether it's rock crawling, or watching a race. Thank you for accepting comments.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 449

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It would be sad to see public use of Johnson Valley. King of the Hammer is a yearly event that my entire off road club looks forward to. Every year we get a motorcade of 20+ people together to drive cross country from Texas to California. I'd hate to see it go.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 450

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please stop taking PUBLIC LAND from the public. We love the ability to use JV for all types of recreation. My business will be directly affected by this action if taken.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 451

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is the mecca of OHV use. To cut any portion of this public land from the public is a horrible travesty . Please do not close this area that is one of the great OHV parks in the country and the world. Josh Smith

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 452

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Alec

**Comment** I love and respect the Marine Corp. But, I implore it to let Johnson Valley stay an OHV area. This is the offroad communities Mecca. An Iwo Jima or Tripoli. It defines us and is the pinnacle of our year with the KOH race. I normally would be all for the Marines getting more resources, but this time I am hoping y'all can find a different venue. Semper Fi, Alec Jones

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 453

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Thank you very much for considering the opinions of the 36 million OHV users in the US. I support the military and want our fighting men and women to have the best equipment and preparation available to them, but also urge you to keep the Johnson Valley area open so that all of the citizens of this great country can explore and enjoy this unique area. The OHV community is filled with people that love our military. We appreciate all the sacrifices you make so that we're able to enjoy the freedoms this great country offers. We are also a community that travels extensively to enjoy our sport. Seeing different parts of this country and getting off the beaten path to enjoy the ruggedness of this great land is as much a part of us as supporting the military. I ask you to seek an alternative to the Johnson Valley area for your training. If an alternative is truly not available, I ask that you work with all of the users of the Johnson Valley area to keep this area open to the citizens of the US.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 454

**Last Name** Crayton

**First Name** Chase

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I felt compelled to write and state my feelings concerning Johnson valley OHV. Seven years ago I bought a pickup truck and went 4 wheeling for the first time, since then my skills and knowledge have slowly increased. The other thing that I have noticed is the huge amount of land that is being closed to vehicles for different reasons. The few challenging public trails that remain have become household names in the 4wd community nation wide, and even throughout the world. One such

place is Johnson valley and the hammers trails. This OHV area is truly legendary, both for its varied and rugged terrain and for hosting the phenomenal king of the hammers race. The money that is brought in by our growing (and expensive) sport is surely important to the local economy. As an opportunity for OHV enthusiasts Johnson valley is irreplaceable. Ultimately access to our public lands for all different user groups is part of what makes this country the greatest place to live in the world. I firmly believe that public lands should be kept for the enjoyment and use of future generations. I hope some day to test my vehicle and myself on the trails of Johnson valley. Sincerely, Chase Crayton

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 455

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Over the last 8 years my family, friends, club, and I have enjoyed the vast land of Johnson Valley and Joshua Tree. I am a supporter of our troops and do feel like out Marines need our support for

whatever training they may need. But I am conflicted here because we love the Johnson Valley area. We venture out there almost every other weekend for our off-road trips and family gatherings. The vast desert has provided some of my most stunning work as far as my professional career when it comes to photography. That area has become part of who my family is. And if you take that away from us we loose a part of of who we are. I love death valley but Johnson Valley is where our hearts are at. I believe a proposal to share the land was submitted and I am 100% in favor of this proposal if it means we can still continue to use JV. But to take it completely away from not only the OHV community but from families like mine is just sad. So please, lets come up with a viable solution that will please both parties.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 456

**Last Name** Barham

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Please keep our public lands public, I would like to take my grandsons there someday.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 457

**Last Name** McCrea

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** I hope the powers that be can take the time to consider the impact not just on those close to this area, but those who travel great distances from around your country and your neighbouring countries to experience this area and everything it has to offer. Thanks for keeping an open mind. Thomas

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 458

**Last Name** Karnash

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** SAve Johnson Valley for off road use!!!! My family has been traveling across the US annually to wheel out there. Let me pass the tradition on to my kids.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 459

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have visited the Hammers/Johnson Valley in the past - and have a desire to go back again some day. With the closures/land take discussed to date, that would make any future trip to the area almost impossible. Please do not close down one of the last really large open offroad areas.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 460

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to the federal governments take over of Johnsons Valley. There are other area and options for he usmc expansion. I support our military, but the public is losing recreation areas weekly. Lets find another option. There is a lot of deaert out there.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 461

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Erik

**Comment** Please reconsider the land acquisition in the Johnson Valley OHV area. I would hope that OHV users and the Marines could both work together to accommodate all activities in JV. I travel across the country from MD twice a year to visit the Hammers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 462

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep JV OHV open to the public. Many people enjoy the scenery out there while offroading and it would be a shame to lose all of that. Dont get me wrong, I have no problem with marine/military training, but I feel there are other places this could be done.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 463

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There are not many places left for recreational four wheelers to enjoy. Many of the spots that are under fire from Gov. are mainly cared for by the four wheel drive community. Why would anyone want to lose more land that was once accessible to them in the past. The Hammers OHV park is literally our Mecca and there is no other area that even come close to being

as important. Little by little we loose more and access which is a horrible injustice to the ones who live,eat and breathe this past time. I want my kids to experience the same outdoor activities that i have had growing up. Four wheeling is good clean fun and very family orientated. Please do not take a way our access.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 464

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please DO NOT take public land away from us !! Johnson Valley is the last public land open to the 4x4 sport !! I'm 57 years old ! 4 wheeling is my life long hobby !!,Please do not close Johnson valley !! Thank you Mike Knorr

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 465

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** this has been an annual event for myself and a number of other Canadians, our trip is over 4000kms round trip that takes us 3-4 days each way to complete. and its worth every second of driving time, and every dollar we spend south of 49th.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 466

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not restrict public access to this awesome area!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 467

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** johnson valley great place to wheel and take family for off road fun whats wrong looking a little more east

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 468

**Last Name** Rowell

**First Name** Jeremy

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a great open area that My family and I visit regularly. It offers a unique terrain that would be a huge loss to the public if it was taken away. Please do not take this public land away from the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 469

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a wonderful area. One of the most scenic and unique. Off road enthusiasts are some of the most patriotic people I have ever met. They appreciate these lands more than anyone I have ever seen. Many of them are not just off-roaders but hikers, bikers, hunters, farmers etc. These are people who truly value the land, america, and the right to use it. Johnson Valley has become world known because of a few, dedicated offroaders. At the KOH event I had a booth set up and talked to at least 100 Marines that came to see the event. Another 200 LOCAL residents. I think that we should do more with the local communities, the Marine base, and get people involved. I think the rules & regulations for the lands should be strictly enforced during the event. I think between the local residents, offroaders, and the marines we could have a much more successful event. I think the Marines should have a prescence at the event, in trucks, troops, etc. It would be a great marketing opportunity for the Marines because the many of the young participants in this sport are enlisted and potential Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 470

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please allow continued access to the Johnson Valley Recreation Area for OHV use. There are very limited areas remaining where the sport of off-roading is legal. Closing these great areas to the public will not allow us to participate in a sport that we love, and prevent access to some of te most

beautiful parts of our country. The off-road community has lost access to areas in the past for numerous reasons, but i assure you none of them were lost because a lack of trying on the communities part. Please be part of reversing the trend of closing public lands to the public and allow Johnson Valley to remain open for all to enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 471

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a wonderful area. One of the most scenic and unique. Off road enthusiasts are some of the most patriotic people I have ever met. They appreciate these lands more than anyone I have ever seen. Many of them are not just off-roaders but hikers, bikers, hunters, farmers etc. These are people who truly value the land, america, and the right to use it. Johnson Valley has become world known because of a few, dedicated offroaders. At the KOH event I had a booth set up and talked to at least 100 Marines that came to see the event. Another 200 LOCAL residents. I think that we should do more with the local communities, the Marine base, and get people involved. I think the rules & regulations for the lands should be strictly enforced during the event. I think between the local residents, offroaders, and the marines we could have a much more successful event. I think the Marines should have a prescence at the event, in trucks, troops, etc. It would be a great marketing opportunity for the Marines because the many of the young participants in this sport are enlisted and potential Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 472

**Last Name** Johnston

**First Name** Terill

**Comment** Hello, Im writing concentering the Marine expansion into Johnson Valley. This is a bad Idea. The public needs public lands. The Economic Rammifications alone could kill the surrounding towns if OHV users have no access. My self and My family travel to Johnson Valley from Utah at least twice a year to off-road. Each time we spend no less than \$5,000 in California alone. I am not alone either. It would be a huge impact to stop all of the thousands of people like me from enjoying OHV's on public land. Please reconsider thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 473

**Last Name** WATSON

**First Name** TRACEY

**Comment** SERVING ON ACTIVE DUTY IN SOUTHER CALIFORNIA HAS BEEN A HUGE ADJUSTMENT FOR MY LIFESTYLE FROM MY ROOTS IN IDAHO. BEING ABLE TO BE IN THE GREAT OUTDOORS IN AREAS LIKE JOHNSON VALLEY IS ONE OF THE ONLY OUTLETS THAT I HAVE LEFT. I LOOK FORWARD TO ANY CHANCE I CAN GET TO MAKE IT UP THERE AND BE AWAY FROM THE CITY AND BUSY LIFE. JOHNSON VALLEY IS ONE OF ONLY A COUPLE AREAS THAT ARE STILL USABLE FOR GREAT OUTDOORS EXPERIENCES.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 474

**Last Name** Hines

**First Name** Joseph

**Comment** I don't visit California to go to Hollywood, the beaches, or the wineries. I make the 3500 mile round trip at least once a year to visit Johnson Valley offroad Area, truthfully it is a rare day that passes without my thinking about the one week or so a year that I have spent there for the last couple of years. I have a tremendous amount of respect for all of our armed forces, the Marines in particular. And as such I will not pretend to understand or try to simplify the complexities involved in training or maintaining the readiness of this great force. I will respectfully ask that those in charge look for other ways to train as needed without acquiring Johnson Valley. Respectfully, Joseph Hines Madison, MS

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 475

**Last Name** Moore

**First Name** Justin

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I am an avid four wheel drive enthusiast and utilize public lands many times a year in support of my hobby. I plan on traveling to Johnson Valley in February to attend an off highway vehicle race held on the public land which might be lost to this acquisition. It would be a shame for the many local economies to miss out on the tourist dollars that come into the area from visitors like me. Please keep public lands open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 476

**Last Name** Clifford

**First Name** Lance

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a very special place for myself, my family and my friends. I go there often for business as well as pleasure. My company goes there every year to cover the King of the Hammers race for the rest of the world that is not able to attend this amazing event that has the entire off roading world captivated. It is our biggest and most important job of the year. Aside from business, we travel down to Johnson Valley a few times a year for family recreation. There is almost nowhere else like it in the country (world?) available to the general public with continual land closures and land grabs by the federal government. While I support our military, I also believe that the public showed it's ability to work along side and active base, even in live firing exercises such as they were conduction at 29 Palms during the King of the Hammers race when there were approximately 20,000 people in the OHV area. Please reconsider taking away one of the absolute true meccas of recreation in this nation. Let us keep Johnson Valley. Respectfully, Lance Clifford President, Pirate Media Group

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 477

**Last Name** padgett

**First Name** james

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV has been a family retreat for me and my family as long as i can remember. I am giving my kids the same experence I had while growing up.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 478

**Last Name** Pook

**First Name** Nic

**Comment** Please do not close access to Johnson Valley. I live over 1000 miles away and have personally been to "The Hammers" 3 times with friends/family to enjoy the terrain. We always make a point of doing our shopping in Lucerne to show thanks for letting us share their land. It would be a huge loss to both the offroad community and the local economy to have this area closed. It is extremely unique terrain and I really think it will not be replaceable.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 479

**Last Name** Freeman

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I've made it out to Johnson's Valley every year for the King of the Hammers (KOH) races and hope to be able to continue doing so. My son is now getting to the age where my wife and I can start taking him with us for longer wheeling trips and KOH is #1 on our list of planned trips throughout the year. If the USMC takes over this land for additional training area then we will be unable to do so. As a member of the US Army and the Colorado Army National Guard for the last 10 years I can understand the need for training area for our soldiers and Marines. However, there are already several large training areas in the nearby locale for them to utilize. Additional training can also be had by convoying out to these farther away training sites, as well as giving soldiers/marines a more diverse field training experience than constantly using the home station areas.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 480

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Reclamation of the Johnson valley for military use seems a bit out of place considering the fiscal situation in the United States today. Notwithstanding is the Government's complete inability to see the profits that come in from all over the country due to usage of OHV parks such as the one in question. People such as myself come from many states away just to be able to enjoy nature, and responsible four wheeling. Do not block many thousands of TAX PAYING citizens from using the lands set aside for recreational use; too many public lands have been closed already.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 481

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We are losing more of our ORV parks all the time, please find an alternative place to do whatever it is you plan on doing with this land. There is plenty of land out there that does not get used by many (or any at all for that matter). Please do not take away one of the premier ORV parks in the country. I am positive there are several enlisted men and women who have, plan to, or frequently visit this area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 482

**Last Name** Cauthen

**First Name** Joshua

**Comment** Johnson Valley means four wheeling to me. I hope the MC finds a way to keep the OHV area open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

483

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Please leave the OHV are open to the public. The land is a mecca for OHV enthusiast such as myself. I have never be able to make the trip out to the area but would like to have the opportunity to take my family there. Public OHV areas are necessary for many to have access to outdoor family activities. The land provides endless revenue streams, from OHV supporting companies to simple tourist dollars. I'm sure that a compromise on land use can be found for all interested. OHV enthusiast are very active in land use and are a great group to have protect and extend the use of the land.

**Date Comment Received**

4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

484

**Last Name**

York

**First Name**

scott

**Comment**

Even though I am not from Ca, nor have I ever been there, the trip planning has already began. The main reason is to bring the family's off road truck to the famous "hammers", and to watch the King of Hammers race. My 2 yr old boys falls asleep watching the KOH movies a couple of days a week. The wife and I are already planning on being there next Feb with our two kids(3 yr old daughter) to watch and wheel for a week or so. The amount of

land that is truly open to the public is getting smaller by the day. This issue brings the question to me if my kids will have any place to recreate on public lands when they get older. Especially will there be any of the epic destination areas left open. If it is truly public land can you please leave it for the public to enjoy. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 485

**Last Name** O'Brien

**First Name** Geoffrey

**Comment** As a active four wheel drive enthusiast I travel twice a year to Johnson Valley to Trail ride and Camp. The Possibility of Losing this Land is devistating to me, Members of my Club, and ORV Enthusiest's across the Nation. Though I do believe in the need for the Millitary to train the troops I do not support the marines expanding the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I also do not support any "joint use" areas and believe that the marines should expand the 29 palms base another direction. Regards, Geoff O'Brien Geoff O'Brien Keep Public Land public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 486

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Me and my family go to johnson valley every year to rock crawl. The trails that are there are the best in the west and maybe in the us. So we hope that you do not annex them for training thank you Wes Brauning.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 487

**Last Name** Waters

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I am an avid off road enthusiast and am very much upset at the land use policies that continue to take away the limited space we have to use. It seems that the off road spaces are the first and often only places considered "up for grabs" whether it is base expansion, wilderness designation, solar or wind farms etc. Johnson Valley has become the premium offroad area for the hard core enthusiasts and my primary use area. It seems clear that the Marines are just paying lip service to the opinions of the offroad users and will do what ever the hell they want anyway.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 488

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is very important to the offroad community. It is a place we take our children to on vacation. It is a place full of great memories, life lessons, and most importantly, good times. Closing Johnson Valley to public access is a horrible idea. It may look like a desolate wasteland, a mere patch of desert, but to millions of Americans, it is a sacred landmark, a Mecca, A Destination. Please find another place to play your war games. Buy a patch of Mexico or something.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 489

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We all thank the Military for fighting for our rights as Americans. One of those rights is to offroad on public land. As the years pass we are constantly loosing public land for recreational use. So please dont take Johnson Valley from us. Manny people travel from around the country and even the world to experience Johnson Valley. I plan on making a family trip along with some close friends to Johnson Valley next April, we hope that the land will still be open to public use. Thank you for your time

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within

specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 490

**Last Name** Fernandez

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a one of a kind place for us off road enthusiasts of any age. This is a place where I can enjoy all of my toys and would not think twice about driving the 6-8 hours to camp on the lake bed and enjoy all that is Johnson Valley. Please do not close this special place!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 491

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is very important to the offroad community. It is a place we take our children to on vacation. It is a place full of great memories, life lessons, and most importantly, good times. Closing Johnson Valley to public access is a horrible idea. It may look like a desolate wasteland, a mere patch of desert, but to millions of Americans, it is a sacred landmark, a Mecca, A Destination. Please find another place to play your war games. Buy a patch of Mexico or something.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 492

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is very important to the offroad community. It is a place we take our children to on vacation. It is a place full of great memories, life lessons, and most importantly, good times. Closing Johnson Valley to public access is a horrible idea. It may look like a desolate wasteland, a mere patch of desert, but to millions of Americans, it is a sacred landmark, a Mecca, A Destination. Please find another place to play your war games. Buy a patch of Mexico or something.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 493

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** In regards to the Marine corps wanting to expand the 29 palms base into the Johnson Valley OHV area I must strongly disapprove of this decision. There is no need to expand the base especially into an area that is vital to the OHV community. This is also important to those towns we drive through on our way there, as we all spend money on our trip to Johnson Valley OHV area.I feel loosing this area is both an abuse of power and economically detrimental to the surrounding towns.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 494

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom it may concern, I'm writing on behalf of Friends of Johnson Valley organization. I'm an avid off roader and frequent "The Hammers" a few times a year not only do I enjoy the races but the friendly environment that is displayed on any given weekend/event. I'm in the military and know of the land and the amount the marine Corp all ready has this land "The Hammers" is more beneficial to local and other surrounding businesses than it is to destroy with artillery! The annual events held at JV OHV are only getting bigger which brings revenue to the business community. There for the marine Corp could continue to practice on one side and allow locals and people that travel from around the world to enjoy a good fun fill weekend or more in the dirt!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 495

**Last Name** McGee

**First Name** Trent

**Comment** On behalf of Daystar Products, a company that manufactures suspension components and accessories for both the military and the automotive aftermarket, we are opposed to the proposed Land Acquisition that would include the Johnson Valley OHV area or any of the surrounding OHV areas. While we strongly support our military and recognize the vital role that training plays in keeping our forces both effective and safe, it is also vitally important for public areas to remain open for motorized recreation. Closures of many OHV areas in the region over the years have caused a concentration of OHV use in Johnson Valley and the surrounding area (including Cougar Buttes), and the loss of yet another area in Southern California will seriously jeopardize the rights of tens of thousands of off-road and outdoor recreation enthusiasts in the Southwest to enjoy their sport in a responsible manner. In addition, countless hours of volunteer money and labor have been instrumental in keeping the area properly maintained and free of trash and debris, not to mention trails properly signed and marked to minimize impact to the environment within the OHV area and the surrounding region. Elimination of the Johnson Valley OHV area will make the tireless efforts and money of these volunteers worthless. It will also have a profound impact on the revenues generated by the surrounding communities from OHV tourists and can hurt the ability for people to enjoy both motorized and non-motorized recreation in many different forms. This includes, but is not limited to: hiking, mountain biking, camping, motorcycling, and many forms of four-wheeled recreation. Let us not forget that a surprising percentage of these enthusiasts are active or former military. On a larger scale, reduced access to motorized recreation will impact the industries associated with supporting off-road recreation, from shops that sell accessories to the manufacturers that produce the equipment. All of these shops and the majority of the manufacturers (including Daystar) are located in the U.S., which means potentially impacting hundreds of thousands of jobs in an economy that is already struggling. Though the area may be viewed by the uninformed that the area is simply a desert wasteland that is of no use to anyone other than the military, there are hundreds of thousands of people that will tell you otherwise. For many, Johnson Valley is the only remaining area in which they can safely and legally enjoy their sport; to take this area away would also take away an aspect of their basic right to the “pursuit of happiness.” In conclusion, I am confident that a satisfactory resolution can be reached that meets the needs of the military and outdoor enthusiasts in their many forms. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 496

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please stop, trying to take our public lands! I am a avid off highway user, and to be frank this is getting a little out of hand with trying to take more land from us. I am a complete supporter of the armed forces, but at some point we need to put a stop to this. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 497

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Diminishing the places to take my/our children for outdoor recreation is mind- boggling! Just how trapped are we supposed be here in the Land of the Free?

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 498

**Last Name** Usnick

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Please reconsider your expansion into Johnson Valley OHV area. I have travelled to Johnson Valley from North Carolina three times in the last three years to recreate. We only have 16 miles of OHV trails there, so I took a job that moved me closer to the west. I understand the need for training and the realestate it requires, but please consider NOT including Johnson Valley. V/R, Rob Usnick

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 499

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close Johnson Valley OHV park. I have driven across the country multiple times to enjoy this area with friends and family. Losing this precious area would crush me. I am an avid 4x4 and outdoor enthusiast and I beg of you  
PLEASE do not close Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 500

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open it is a great place to go outside and enjoy the outdoors. We need to keep public land open to the public. Thank you for reading this.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 501

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been planning a trip east of the mississippi to KOH in 2012 since 2006. Thats when I started building my rig for "The Hammers". My whole family has been looking forward to this, and has been a part of making it happen. This area is known world wide as the location of one of the most demading motorsports in the world. This area is "All of Ours" as Americans, including 4WD enthusiasts. I believe this community, as well as the hikers, and bikers that use this area,a multi-billion \$/YR demographic is large enough to preclude this land appropriation. The Federal Gov't has plenty of other land they have already made off-limits to us based on fraudulent, in-accurate, and more and politically motivated science, and 29 palms doesn't need to be bigger. I know, I've humped it. Why can't this continue to be known as the worlds toughest race! I ask for your consideration and Let us keep the Hammers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 502

**Last Name** davignon

**First Name** keith

**Comment**

With all due respect to the USMC, please do not take JV OHV area away from us. That area is used by tens of thousands of hardworking, patriotic Americans. We have limited OHV areas with no other options. The USMC can expand in other areas, including Sheephole, Fort Erwin, or Amboy. Seasonal access to JV OHV as in Option 6 is a farce, that area will quickly become permanently closed too! There are countless families and businesses, that rely on activities in and around JV OHV. Likewise, millions in revenue and taxes are generated directly and indirectly, from access to our lands. The USMC fights for our freedoms every second, for that I can never thank you enough. What I'm asking you to understand is this battle for JV OHV is also a battle for American freedom. We are on the same team. Please leave the JV OHV area open and accessible to the American public. Thank you and God bless the US Military.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 503

**Last Name** davignon

**First Name** keith

**Comment** With all due respect to the USMC, please do not take JV OHV area away from us. That area is used by tens of thousands of hardworking, patriotic Americans. We have limited OHV areas with no other options. The USMC can expand in other areas, including Sheephole, Fort Erwin, or Amboy. Seasonal access to JV OHV as in Option 6 is a farce, that area will quickly become permanently closed too! There are countless families and businesses, that rely on activities in and around JV OHV. Likewise, millions in revenue and taxes are generated directly and indirectly, from access to our lands. The USMC fights for our freedoms every second, for that I can never thank you enough. What I'm asking you to understand is this battle for JV OHV is also a battle for American freedom. We are on the same team. Please leave the JV OHV area open and accessible to the American public. Thank you and god bless the US Military.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry

spending. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 504

**Last Name** Sasser

**First Name** Craig Ellis

**Comment** Even though I live in Mississippi, the Johnson Valley OHV area is important to me and those who share in my interest of operating vehicles off-road. The Johnson Valley area has some of the nation's best OHV trails, and people travel from around the world to go four wheeling in the area. People like me have fewer and fewer places to recreate, so please consider keeping the OHV area in Johnson Valley intact. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 505

**Last Name** Long

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an amazing area, movies are filmed there, so are commercials. literally thousands of dollars are pumped into the local economy every month by people like me, who drive 400-2000 miles each way to experience all the desert has to offer. We leave no trace so it seems like nobody uses the are, that is because we love it, and we want it to be around for our kids and their kids. We do not want to see it closed or worse yet bombed by the Marines. I love the United States and our amazing Military. I am sure they can find an area that truly is "unused" to practice, please don't make this it. My local rock crawling club spent a total of more than 20,000 this Feb. to go see the king of the hammers race. Money spend in CA, that would have been spent in AZ. Think about.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 506

**Last Name** Kizmann

**First Name** Cody

**Comment** Please keep Johnson valley open for off roading I come from Canada to enjoy the space it's beautiful and me and my friends enjoy it so please keep it open

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 507

**Last Name** HANSEN

**First Name** MATT

**Comment** PLEASE KEEP OUR LAST GOOD WHEELING ALIVE PLEASE I DRIVE OVER 1000 MILES EACH WAY A FEW TIMES A YEAR TO COME WHEELING THERE !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 508

**Last Name** moseley

**First Name** john

**Comment** i have enjoyed going to "lucerne" with my family/friends for years now...attending races, participating in them, relaxing with the family, off roading, etc...all good family stuff!...a major portion of my business is also desert race/recreation type vehicles (rock-crawler, trucks and sand rails, etc). the loss of this area would severely impact my financial stability, as if the weak economy wasnt enough!...please consider other alternatives for expansion, and thank you for serving and protecting our freedom...

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 509

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please take into consideration the impact to family recreation that Johnson Valley provides, its invaluable.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 510

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is an amazing place to wheel. Been traveling from Maryland to enjoy the area as an OHV enthusiast for two weeks the last two years. Would be a shame for such an area to be closed to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 511

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please dont close my 4x4 wheeling area. This is a place I have grown up with my family and friends. Now i bring my family and new friends out here to 4x4. The Marine's can find a new place to use that wouldn't close off a huge area that so many people use to have fun. thankyou for your time. Eddie Peterson

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 512

**Last Name** Folena

**First Name** Beverly

**Comment** Hello, Please reconsider the expansion into Johnson Valley OHV area in short the Hammer Trails, my family have been camping and 4 wheeling out there for over ten years.It is a great spot that cannot be duplicated anywhere else, I would like my son to have the same chance that we did Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 513

**Last Name** williams

**First Name** fred

**Comment** I oppose the expansion of the Marine base into Johnson Valley OHV area. Johnson Valley and the Hammers trail system are some of the preeminent off road and rock crawling trails in the world. 4x4 enthusiasts from across the nation come to these trails to test their driving skills and vehicle construction. The acquisition of this area will detriment the local economy, off road enthusiasts and eliminate one of the greatest destinations for 4-wheelers. please reconsider this expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 514

**Last Name** taylor

**First Name** David

**Comment** I would ask that you do not take over the Jhonson valley OHV area. I go four wheeling there with my Father as well as my two young kids. The "Hammer" trails are like no other place on earth. We "four wheelers" have no other place to go that is like the "hammers". I personally spend thousands a year in the local community. It would be a great loss for my family if Jhonson Valley were to be closed. Thank You David Taylor

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 515

**Last Name** Brown

**First Name** David

**Comment** Hello I have been going out o Johnson valley for over ten years to rockcrawl mainly the Hammer Trails. Please do not take any more land away there has been to much taken that we the public can go on. Thank you David

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 516

**Last Name** ganrud

**First Name** kurt

**Comment** though i'm 2200 miles away, i beleive that as a avid responsible offroader. having places to take my kids out to enjoy the hobby we love is becoming harder to find, unfortunatley, their are a few bad apples who are hurting this

wonderful hobby for the rest of us. such as anything. but for us to loose yet another place to go is devestating. do to thye very minimal availability we allready have to public land. johnson valley is on my bucket list to do as a family vacation.and having it close down would greatly dissappoint my family along with thousands of others. please consider every other option,other than taking johnson valley away from outdoor enthusiasts alike. thank you very much the Ganrud family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 517

**Last Name** Rethoret

**First Name** Rick

**Comment** I'm hoping we can work together to make something happen that will still allow for four wheeling in Johnson Valley. I am surprised about many of the findings in the report. Too many limited or little impact, when it appears as though if the Marines take over Johnson Valley an entire industry and those who participate in rock crawling may have no other place to go. Nothing is like JV. The Hammers are our Mecca and to lose that would be devistating to myself and my family. We travel there many times a year and my son and I have developed a strong bond becasue we have been able to build a couple of Jeeps to take out there. Please...if feels like a land grab. Keep Johnson Valley open for all times to the off road community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-

making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 518

**Last Name** Hoitink

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I have made the trip to this specific OHV area towing my Off road vehicle. It is a beautiful place and should be protected from being closed.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 519

**Last Name** Hoitink

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I have made the trip from Canada to Johnson Valley OHV park towing my off road vehicle, and had planned on doing it again. It is a beautiful place and it needs to be protected from being closed down.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 520

**Last Name** Hoitink

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I have made the trip from Canada to Johnson Valley OHV park towing my off road vehicle, and had planned on doing it again. It is a beautiful place and it needs to be protected from being closed down.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 521

**Last Name** Meyer

**First Name** Bob

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Vally open as an OHV area. While I am not a "local" to the area, JV is a destination that I enjoy visiting in the old jeep when I'm down that way.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the

Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 522

**Last Name** Gardina

**First Name** Ole

**Comment** Please keep these public land open to the public. My family and I really enjoy our family hobby of four wheeling out in our public desert of Southern California. Thank you in advance, Ole Gardina and the Gardina Family, Sandy, Boone, Brock, and Brynn.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 523

**Last Name** Brodie

**First Name** Andrew

**Comment** The Johnson Valley area should remain open to OHV use, it is a unique place that cannot be replaced should it be closed. This area provides recreational opportunity to thousands of off road enthusiasts every year, it has created a whole new form of off road racing in the form of the King of the Hammers race. To lose this area would be a major blow to the off road industry. I fully support all branches of the US military and even have friends serving in the Marine Corp but I feel that there are better alternatives for training than closing the Johnson Valley area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 524

**Last Name** Fortin

**First Name** Gilman

**Comment** When I was stationed in 29 Palms it was the only local area for off-road activities. If you go and as your Marines and Sailors stationed there who have off-road/off-highway/dirt bikes/quads/side-by-sides (and there are hundreds) where they go to off-road they will tell you Johnson Valley. It should be kept because it is an often and heavily used MWR location.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 525

**Last Name** Kimmel

**First Name** Jeremy

**Comment** I am commenting on the possible closure of much of Johnson Valley OHV area. Coming out to enjoy the desert and everything it has to offer has become an annual experience for my family and I. I fully support our armed forces but feel that our public OHV areas are so limited and constantly under attack I cannot support this expansion. The older I get, the less of our great country I am allowed to share with my children, unless of course we view pictures from a computer since we are locked out of so many incredible areas due to "conservation." Please reconsider your stance and look for other alternatives so that we can continue to enjoy this small part of our great country!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 526

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is a very large part of the OHV community. The vast variety of trails there bring people from all over the US as well as from other parts of the world. Us losing access to this land would be similar to an entity taking all of the land that the military currently trains and utilizes for testing purposes then explaining to you that "yes you can have this equipment and these vehicles sitting in your garage, but no you can't have anywhere to use them anymore." The land also brings a great deal of money into the local businesses that for some may be all that is keeping their doors open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 527

**Last Name** Probst

**First Name** Wade

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 528

**Last Name** Tipton

**First Name** Tyson

**Comment** I use the Johnston Valley OHV area several times a year but to lose it would be a great loss to many. There are so few places anymore for those of us who like to use rock/desert areas and we need to keep them open to us. PLEASE don't close these areas to our use. It affects tens or thousands of people. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 529

**Last Name** Shewey

**First Name** Jerry

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the states premier off road areas. It is world famous for its varied terrain and offers a wide variety of recreational opportunities. It would sadden me greatly to have this area closed to off road recreation. Respectfully Jerry Shewey

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 530

**Last Name** Ganrud

**First Name** Liz

**Comment** I think taking something like this away from the off-road community is just wrong. This land is being used for lots of different things. Why do they need to use this area when there are plenty of other areas around the world that they can use. For instance, all the desert land in New Mexico or other areas in California. This land is used for off-roading and also lots of bikers and other things. I personally think taking this area away from them is wrong!! Find different land to use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 531

**Last Name** Burke

**First Name** Aaron

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is the place I learned to offroad. This area is the best place in the USA for the offroading community. People come from all over the country just to say they have been to the "Hammers". It would be the biggest loss in the offroad community to lose JV OHV. Thank you Aaron Burke

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 532

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area is an asset to the hobby and sport of 4wd driving. It would be a travesty to lose an area of such enormous recreational importance. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 533

**Last Name** Dalzell

**First Name** Ned

**Comment** Although I have never been to Johnson Valley, it is on my "bucket list" for life. I was first introduced to in through the king of the hammers racing event. Living across the country, that kind of landscape is some completely different that it is just asking to be explored by myself, and others. Please consider keeping this land open to the public, so I, and other who have not had the chance to experience, all that it has to offer, can.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 534

**Last Name** Dalzell

**First Name** Ned

**Comment** Although I have never been to Johnson Valley, it is on my "bucket list" for life. I was first introduced to in through the king of the hammers racing event. Living across the country, that kind of landscape is some completely different that it is just asking to be explored by myself, and others. Please consider keeping this land open to the public, so I, and other who have not had the chance to experience, all that it has to offer, can.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 535

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We need to save Johnson Valley for our family and friends to enjoy the experience of safe off roading. This area has so much to offer now and in generations to come. Please work with us to keep this area open. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 536

**Last Name** Dalzell

**First Name** Ned

**Comment** Although I have never been to Johnson Valley, it is on my "bucket list" for life. I was first introduced to in through the king of the hammers racing event. Living across the country, that kind of landscape is some completely different that it is just asking to be explored by myself, and others. Please consider keeping this land open to the public, so I, and other who have not had the chance to experience, all that it has to offer, can.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 537

**Last Name** Eddy

**First Name** Clint

**Comment** Regarding the taking over/closing of portions or all of Johnson Valley OHV area. I fully support my military and what it needs to accomplish. I also fully support this hobby and profession that puts me in OHV areas, and Johnson Valley is my absolute favorite area to spend time when I can make the trip from Colorado. the folks that enjoy OHV use see their lands being taken every day, and this one is a big deal. I urge you to reconsider your current plans and allow Johnson Valley to stay a dedicated OHV area. Thank You Clint Eddy

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 538

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an avid offroader and outdoors enthusiast I strongly urge the Marine Corps to find other alternatives to the proposed measures that will greatly effect our beloved sport. The vast majority of offroad enthusiast are also patriots and support our service men and women in their defense of freedom. Please support us in our time of need. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 539

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the public, this is a major offroad destination for thousands of people. We drive from Oklahoma once a year to enjoy it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 540

**Last Name** La Fleur

**First Name** Cameron

**Comment** Aside from the fact this is a Public Recreation Area, there has been an entire industry created out of the Hammers. This industry has created jobs.

It's funny that the same politicians who talk about the need for jobs are all about shutting down this industry. The powers at be are trying to push Green Jobs on us claiming it will help slow the affects of Global Warming, even though there is still no conclusive proof that human impact has created any Global Warming. But my hope is that Johnson Valley remains in place for many generations to use and enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 541

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson valley as a useable ORV area. I watch King of the Hammers videos every year they come out, and one of these days I am bound and determined to make it out there and watch in person. This is one of the few places in America with this kind of terrain. Keep it open and keep the travel and profits in America. Otherwise our only option is to go down to mexico for Baja, and that doesn't do America a whole lot of good. Thank you for your time, Paul in Kansas.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 542

**Last Name** Matchell

**First Name** Kenton

**Comment** Please keep Johnson valley open to the public!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 543

**Last Name** Fox

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** Johnson valley is a mecca for families like ours. We travel from the greater Seattle area to Johnson valley for great recreational activity, to a terrain that is world famous, an absolutely irreplaceable vacation destination. PLEASE allow the continued off-road recreation to continue. Respectfully, Tony Fox Port Orchard, Wa.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 544

**Last Name** Jongewaard

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** I oppose the Marine Corp expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area. Southern California has a large and vital economy with many residence who choose to Off Road as their form of recreation. Over the past two decades

we have lost thousands(if not millions of acres) of OHV land area making OHV areas rare. Johnson Valley is our largest OHV area left and must stay that way. While I appreciate the need for the Marine Corp to train I also know that there are many areas to the east, as well as areas currently used by other services (i.e. ARMY) that the USMC can utilize - including but not limited to the California / Arizona Manuever Area. My tax dollars fund our military and I choose to not have them spent on the expansion of the 29 Palms Base into the Johnson Valley OHV.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 545

**Last Name** Scott

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** Plain and simple...taking Johnson Valley/ the hammers away from the public would be like taking an arm off some people. The reason I put it like that is that some people plan for an entire year to go out there for a few days just to enjoy their time out there. Some people make that their one and only destination for an entire year even. I myself try to make it to Johnson Valley about once a year. Sometimes twice. For me its about a 600 mile drive one way. It is an awesome place to be and go to, and I look forward to it every single time that I go. I had talked to two different groups of people at the

King Of Hammers and one group was from Indiana (46 hours of straight driving one way) and another from Texas (25 hours of straight driving one way)and that was their big trip of the year. Not only is it a great place to have people enjoy themselves, it also is a great place for the surrounding businesses to get some extra customers throughout the year. Plainly put, taking away Johnson Valley would take a huge effect on not only peoples lives but also the surronding communities that look forward to having OHV enthusiasts come there. Thanks for your time, Chris

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 546

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area needs to stay open for the public to enjoy! I drove all the way out there in Feb. of this year and spent a week in Johnson Valley to watch The King Of The Hammers race. I cant wait to go back out there with My family again to do some trail riding in our Jeep.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 547

**Last Name** Dixon

**First Name** David

**Comment** I made my first trip to Johnson Valley this past winter. Living in Missouri I am not used to having access to such great public lands to enjoy. Most all outdoor activities here have to be on private lands. Especially any thing to do with off road recreation. I have already made plans to revisit Johnson Valley next year and hope to stay longer so I can explore and enjoy more of the area. I think it would be a great dis-service to the public to shut down such a great area for outdoor recreation. I would to tell my kids and grandkids about visiting the area and hope they would have the chance to do the same. There has to be a better way to meet the military's training needs without shutting down more public lands. I know there are several other branches of the military that have test ranges close by, surely a joint training area could be established without dedicating such a vast amount of land to just the marines. I DO NOT think that this land acquisition would be the best use for such a wonderful area that could be used for public recreation and outdoor activities for many generations to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 548

**Last Name** Ude

**First Name** Tyler

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open! Its one of the places ive always wanted to travel to and have plans to do so this next feb for the KOH event as well as to wheel my own buggy there. I understand the importance of the military but its getting harder and harder to keep land open for our use. Please do not close it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 549

**Last Name** Kushmer

**First Name** Seth

**Comment** I have never been to the Hammers / Johnson Valley but plan to go one day. I blow a lot of money on parts and in local communities to wheel. It is a good economy stimulant and good family fun. Please don't take away any more outdoor activities or beautiful places.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 550

**Last Name** Caproni

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** I have been out to Johnson valley twice now. Each time has been to use the ohv park. I even made it out for the king of hammers. Staying several days, I bought food, hotel room, and spent plenty of money in the community. This park should stay open to all off road vehicles. There is not too many places still open for off roaders, and defiantly nothing like Johnson valley!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 551

**Last Name** Albert

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I first heard about Johnson Valley through reading an off road magazine. It was some ten years later that I finally made my "pilgrimage" to Johnson Valley to see the 2009 King of the Hammers race. From the moment my wife and I stepped foot in the sand of Means dry lake bed we vowed to return. Due to the birth of our daughter last year, we were unable to return as soon as we had planned, however we plan to return as a family next year for the 2012 KOH race. It should be noted that my family and I spend several thousand dollars to make this trip, further assisting the national and local economies. Please consider people like me, my family, and our friends who still wish to visit the hammers again. Please don't close our trails. Thank you, Chris Albert

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 552

**Last Name** Rivers

**First Name** Jesse

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area needs to remain open to the public, period. A lot of time and effort has been spent in creating the trails in the area and they are irreplaceable. Already too many public lands are being taken away from the public especially the OHV crowd. Johnson Valley needs to remain as is so that the tens of thousands of visitors can continue to enjoy it. I make the trip down about twice a year and spend a lot of money in Lucern Valley and the surrounding area. I'm sure I'm not the only one spending money in the small communities around the area. To close Johnson Valley OHV would be the end to many small businesses in the area. Our economy is already on shaky ground, there is no reason to make the area suffer any worse. Johnson Valley OHV should remain open 24/7/365 as it is now. Thank you for your time. Jesse Rivers OHV user and enthusiast.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 553

**Last Name** underwood

**First Name** mark

**Comment** Hello, My wife and I moved here 8 years ago over 2000 miles away just For Johnson valley, Nothing else. We moved here from the north east coast where wheeling is poac hing. There is no support for Offroading In the North Eastern States. We came from a area where Friday night the local kids would Illegally drive on others land and trash other people's property. We saw the rare opportunity Johnson valley provides for everyone. So we started are family here. We now have a 5 year old son. Because of local clubs, and friendly wheeling trips offroading has become treasure to value and take care of. My son now makes it a point to pick up litter and spend time outdoors, in a age where kids show little respect and no desire to leave the TV. We have 36,000 in receipts just from last year spent in the Johnson valley area in regards to offroading in Johnson Valley. I have purchased a RV, Buggy , Diesel truck, and a Trailer. Just to use in Johnson Valley OHV on top of the 36,000 dollars. Not including the thousand dollars in tools and supplies to use these toys. We have been coming to Johnson valley OHV for over 7 years and there is NOTHING compared to the terrain in the United States of this size for OHV.

**Date Comment Received**

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 554

**Last Name** Verdier

**First Name** Joshua

**Comment** First and for most, I love offroading. Rockcrawling in particular, but also many other forms. Johnson Valley is one of the most recent new places that I have discovered and now really enjoy going to. It is a place I plan to visit again and will hopefully be able to visit for years to come. It is one of the best places I have ever had the chance to visit. Please don't shut it down.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 555

**Last Name** Adler

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** Johnson Valley recreational area is very important to our business which employs over 1000 people. This area is one of the best off-road areas in the country and is enjoyed by thousands of families on a monthly basis. Loss of this area would mean loss of a great family recreation spot and could mean loss of jobs.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 556

**Last Name** Breakey

**First Name** Matson

**Comment** As a US Navy Veteran, I understand and totally support the needs of our Military. However, I also value the use of unique lands to support a growing recreational pass-time and industry that has become a critical part of the American Identity. Off roading, as an Italian friend recently told me, is a greatly American creation and tradition. One that has not only contributed to a great many jobs in this amazing country of ours, but is a part of the life of thousands of men and women across this land. Some people like hiking, some like running, some like fishing, but off-roaders love the open roads and the experience of pushing your vehicle to the limits in areas that most will never try. And many times, the technology we see today being used to protect and serve America's military was first flirted with by an off road enthusiast. Therefore, I wish to appeal to the US Marines to find another avenue rather than the re-acquisition of Johnson Valley. JV has become a destination point for thousands of off road enthusiasts at a time with such locations are closing, I urge you to keep an American tradition alive and let generations of off roaders enjoy the challenges, excitement and memories Johnson Valley has provided us all.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 557

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I had been waiting to travel to Johnson Valley since early 2003 when I received my drivers license. This past February 2011 my best friend and I decided to make the journey from our homes in northern California. Words cannot explain how great this experience was. It was the first time I had been camping in almost two years. That first trip will always hold a place dear in my heart and I would like to share it with my friends and family in the future. Please allow us four wheelers and outdoor enthusiasts to continue to use this great piece of land that still lets you escape from the every day hustle and bustle of city life. Thank you for your consideration.  
Michael Contreras

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 558

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Tony

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to OHV use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 559

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Save the Hammers!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 560

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I love the Johnson Valley area ,and i was there for the 2010 King of the Hammers, I plan on running in the race in the next few years and would love to be able to take a family one day to camp and enjoy the Hammers Trail system and Johnson Valley OHV area. There is so much other space that resembles the Afgan terrain and it would be terrible to remove this area from public use. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 561

**Last Name** Foster

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I wanted to attempt to explain how important JV OHV area is to my immediate and extended family. First of all my family visits the JV OHV area twice a month to camp and enjoy the OHV recreation area. I often invite extended family to camp and also have co-workers and friends camp along during these trips. Closing the JV OHV area would have a series impact on our outdoor lifestyle that we don't believe is necessary. As I am not expert in land use issues I would suggest that there are more people that enjoy the outdoor life style at the JV OHV area that will not know about these issues and the volume of responses is not a true reflection of the off-road and OHV community. A decision panel cannot evaluate the number of responses and think that is the only people that are concerned. I believed the USMC wants the airspace to conduct training and there are alternatives

to this. I would suggest that the US ARMY has one of the largest training areas in the United States at Fort Irwin and I believe it could be used by the USMC. Closing down JV OHV area would be a tragedy and I implore you not to close it down to public use. Thank you in advance Chris Foster

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 562

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, My family and friends have been visiting Johnson Valley for the past 10 years, and look forward to EVERY trip we can afford to get out there. It is our #1 destination about 5 times each year! I understand and believe that the military needs places to train, but there has to be other places that are NOT already BLM land that could be used. Couldn't the land to the East of Johnson Valley be a good training area? Please consider other options as all of the local small businesses would suffer a great loss of income if the off road community were to loose the area. Thanks, Bryan Putman

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small

businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 563

**Last Name** Barnett

**First Name** Bill

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the best in the country. It would be a shame to have it be closed to OHV use. I visit once or twice a year and it is 2200 miles roundtrip from home.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 564

**Last Name** mason

**First Name** andrew

**Comment** gentleman. my name is lance corporal mason. i am stationed at 29 palms, i understand the needs for a larger training area, however... encroaching into

the johnson valley off highway vehicle recreation area is not the right way, the desert is a big place, and there is plenty of space for both addaquate training area, and for off roaders to have our area to our own. thank you gentelman. - LCpl mason. 1/7 H&S co.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 565

**Last Name** Bednar

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** In my opinion I think that this area should remain open too the offroad community. with the off highway recreational opportunities shrinking year after year, putting users in smaller and smaller areas. to lose this area would be devastating to the offroad community. Dan.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 566

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to respectfully request that you allow the Johnson Valley OHV area to remain open as a public land. While I, as a US Veteran fully support and honor our Armed Forces, it is also my desire to keep areas open for my family and friends to have areas to enjoy including Johnson Valley. As you are aware, there are other area that are available for our fine United States Marines to use in the manner that they would use the OHV area of Johnson Valley. These other areas would be just as beneficial to the Marines, while still allowing the public access to the stellar Off-Road trails and venue offered at Johnson Valley. Along with my wife and I, our entire family engages in and enjoys Off-Road. Both my son and daughter have planned vacations around wheeling off-road, and my granddaughter has been off-road during her first year of life. She now asks to ride in the Jeeps and go explore at the age of two. I would like to thank you for taking the time to read my request and take my concerns into consideration. Hopefully, this matter will be resolved in a way that allows the public to continue to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV and still find a suitable area for our fine USMC to utilize for their continued training.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 567

**Last Name** Bednar

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** In my opinion I think that this area should remain open too the offroad community. with the off highway recreational opportunities shrinking year after year, putting users in smaller and smaller areas. to lose this area would be devastating to the offroad community. Dan.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 568

**Last Name** Bednar

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** In my opinion I think that this area should remain open too the offroad community. with the off highway recreational opportunities shrinking year after year, putting users in smaller and smaller areas. to lose this area would be devastating to the offroad community. Dan.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 569

**Last Name** Schwasinger

**First Name** Dustin

**Comment** I would like to keep JV open to public use. I've never been, but it is on my list of must see, must go to places in the USA. My family and I would be devastated to see this wheeling mecca closed down. I understand the Marines need the best training in the world, because they ARE the best in

the world, but certainly they could find someplace else that can offer the same benefits as JV, without putting thousands of people out of their favorite wheeling area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 570

**Last Name** gorgone

**First Name** phillip

**Comment** i am a concerned off roader.i am 51 years old and have been enjoying Johnson valley for over 30 years.i now have kids and they also enjoy the desert.i understand the marines position and would only like to say that we have lost so much of the desert as recreational areas already to lose more is hard to understand.going east from 29 palms is to an off roader like me and better solution as we lost this area to riding some years back.im sure this alt.has been looked at.my last comment would be if we were to lose jv.i could only hope that the marines might be instrumental in helping us acquire new areas which we can access.thanks,phil

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 571

**Last Name** Klanish

**First Name** Corey

**Comment** Please look for other location the hammers is a dream location I wish to visit to fulfill in my quest of traveling to all ohv area to enjoy the offerings

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 572

**Last Name** Leigh

**First Name** Jason

**Comment**

Hello and thank you for your time. My name is Jason Leigh I served from 88'-92' in the Marine Corp first as a 2621 and then as a 5800 (5831) those in the corp will know those MOS numbers. Just as I started at the bottom and had to work my way up in the Corp learning its history and deep roots in pride, honor, respect and thinking of the unit as whole not just individuals. Offroading and Jeeps have offered me another version of this with the friends and knowledge I have gained by being a part of something bigger than myself. I have found the Hammers and the offroad communitiee around them to be a great opportunity for families and groups to come together and learn the right way to do something in a competitive atmosphere. With the shrinking opportunities for these types of events to be held elsewhere and knowing the Marine Corps has other options I am respectfully requesting that as a former Marine you try to find a way to adapt, improvise and overcome this by looking hard at the other options in order to keep a good thing from being taken from future attendees and spectators while still fulfilling the mission that faces the Marine Corps. I ask that you please dont end something that in its own right provides to a civilian populace what the Marine Corps gave to myself and other former Marines, the chance to belong and believe in something bigger than themselves. Thank you for your time, respectfully Lcpl Jason G Leigh Honorably discharged Marine.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 573

**Last Name** Bednar

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** In my opinion I think that this area should remain open too the offroad community. with the off highway recreational opportunities shrinking year after year, putting users in smaller and smaller areas. to lose this area would be devastating to the offroad community. Dan.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 574

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** even though i'm sure my contributions to this are nothing more than a drop in the bucket, it scares me to think that the thousands of dollars i've spent building my truck SPECIFICALLY to be capable of wheeling at the johnson valley ohv area could soon be wasted. if my understanding is correct, much of the land this expansion is after is intended solely for extra airspace -- there's a lot of extra airspace out there in that big desert that isn't DIRECTLY adjacent to the PREMIER ohv area in the western united states and possibly the entire country. consider the land to the north or east, the JVOHV area is not the only option. it may be the simplest or the quickest, but it's not RIGHT. as a side point, with the concern given to the impact of OHV users on the desert tortoise, it's incredibly surprising to me how the same issue is essentially glossed over when it comes to tanks and weaponry, things that are much more likely to kill or maim those same tortoises. you can see and avoid a tortoise from a truck, i've seen them myself. you can't see, much less avoid one in a tank, and i'm quite sure a bomb dropping from a plane isn't going to care what it lands on. while i may not be capable of

writing the most properly critical letter possible about this matter, i hope i've at least made an attempt to convey the fact that the JVOHV area means a lot to me. riding along with a friend on the trails is what got me hooked on rock crawling to begin with and what led me to build my own truck. if this land is taken away, soon there will be nowhere left within hundreds of miles where i can go to with the difficulty of trails and the same level of enjoyment that i can get at johnson valley. as i've read before, once the camel sticks its head in the tent, the rest is soon to follow. i'd really hate to be squeezed out of my favorite ohv area of the few we have left. what new ohv lands will be opened as a concession to JV being encroached on?

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS addresses impacts to desert tortoise in Section 4.10 of the EIS and concludes that the proposed action would result in significant impacts to desert tortoise.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 575

**Last Name** Fedor

**First Name** Andrew

**Comment** Please save Johnson Valley, it is a very valuable asset to the offroading community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 576

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please let it be known that very little areas are left to enjoy the off roading experience and Johnson Valley is very important to me. I have enjoyed this area for 4 years now and hope that we can keep it open to all uses including sight seeing in a unique part of California.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 577

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please spare this area. 2 places many of us Florida wheelers would love to go is Telico and King of the Hammers area. We have lost 1 so please don't make us lose the other.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 578

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a former Marine I respect your right to expand 29 palms, but as an avid off roader I would like to request that you look elsewhere for your expansion. I have had a dream to take a vacation to California and off road the Hammer trails. There aren't a lot of places to wheel those kinds of trails.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 579

**Last Name** Glatzel

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** My family and I enjoy the Johnson Valley OHV area very much and look forward to trips to the area every year. We have been going every year for 10 years to play in the desert and would be saddened to have the space restricted. The Johnson Valley OHV area is a great place for some good clean fun which seems to be harder and harder to find these days. We have found that this space in particular is our favorite for off highway use. Please don't restrict the use of this land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 580

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson valley. The hammers. Ohv area. This area is very unique. The best trails in the world. This area should remain open for public use. It's about a 9 hour drive from my home but we make the trip many times a year. The loss of this area would be a sad loss to the 4x4 and ohv community. Thank you for your time -Nicholas M.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 581

**Last Name** Silcock

**First Name** Douglas

**Comment** I appose the prefered option #6 for the USMC and think they should use the east side of the current grounds. We as OHV family use this land most of the year and have done so for many years in the past. I grew up riding bikes and driving cars in this area. For this to be removed would impact not just my childhood but my kids future on this land. In this current economy we can not afford to take more dollars away from local business. There is millions of dollars spent just in the OHV business and along with the local shops that we purchase food and supply from. There is no reason for the USMC cant use the east side of the current base that takes importance over the money that will be lost. I strongly suggest they move to the east and think about that option more in detail.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 582

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson valley, Have many great trips out there enjoying the desert but best of all, It was all have been with family and good friends. Have gone around 8 Times in just 2010. Already have gone to the hammers 3 times just this year. can't picture use not having JV

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 583

**Last Name** Peet

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** We don't have enough OHV space as it is, please don't take more!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 584

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm a resident of Virginia and a Huge fan of Legal Off Roding. There are so few locations that are still open and would hate to see another one shut down. Johnson Valley is one of the greatest right up there with Moab and The Rubicon, not to mention King of the Hammers is my NASCAR. Closing Johnson Valley will not only limit our sport but also economically cripple many in the surrounding area. Please keep Johnson Valley open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 585

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area has become one of the most talked about areas to wheel probably surpassing moab, UT or atleast coming in a close second if not. This area is important to our sport and recreation. I have never been here but it is a dream of mine to attend KOH and be see all the other stuff that makes johnson valley the place it is.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 586

**Last Name** hartwig

**First Name** wayne

**Comment** please keep johnson valley ohv area open to recreation

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 587

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hello US Marines, I am writing to oppose the acquisition of the Johnson Valley Recreation area. I am an avid four wheeling enthusiast and am 100% against that land being used for anything other than an off-road recreation area. The landscape is beautiful there and it would be a shame to close down a very famous recreation area just to have the military drop bombs on it to practice. If you want to drop bombs, go into the flat deserts where there is no one enjoying the land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 588

**Last Name** Bitterli

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Hey, I hope that the trails don't become closed like a lot of trails already have! I'm an active wheeler and would love to someday make it out that way to do some sight seeing on the trails! I'm sure there are other places that can be used for training...I know we have a base near my house that is being used but sure could be used more often. Don't want to mention what bases those are but i'm sure you have already looked in to that? well don't want to sit here and rant or rave about this...should be tens of thousands of people writing anyways. But i pray these trails stay open for years to come. Thanks for your time, Paul

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses

would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 589

**Last Name** Beer

**First Name** david

**Comment** Johnson valley is the most known place in the off-road world. It holds the biggest event of the year for all off-road enthussis. off-road isn't just a bunch of people in the woods running trees over we respect the land we wheel on. We clean up our trash and maintian our trails. We follow trail markers and never wander off them. I've been wheeling since i was 9 years old. My dad got me into this sport and ive been hooked since. I hope to be able to say the same with my kids someday. Everyone i wheel is like family to me and i meet so many people through what i do. taking off-road land away for me is like taking yellow stone park or the grand canyon away from tourist. This place is one of the main places that i wanna go wheelings at and plan on doing so. So please keep it open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 590

**Last Name** jamison

**First Name** greg

**Comment** I follow the King of the Hammers every year. It takes place in Johnson Valley, im sure you are aware. I have looking forward to coming down to watch in person next year and years to follow. I hope you guys continue to keep it open for us off-roaders. Thanks Greg Jamison

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 591

**Last Name** Woodard

**First Name** Brent

**Comment** To Whom it May Concern, I am a Mechanical Engineering Undergraduate student at Michigan Technological University, graduating in December of this year. I have been interested in Jeeps and responsible four-wheeling since I was 12 years old. The opportunities that Johnson Valley area offers are quite amazing. This four-wheel Mecca attracts tens of thousands of four wheel drive enthusiasts every year from all portions of the country. If Johnson Valley is lost, the sport of responsible four-wheeling will suffer a major blow. This four- wheeling stimulates the economy in a time of dire need, and if Johnson Valley was closed, this area would suffer a major economic blow. There are other places that you can consider for testing facilities, so please save Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 592

**Last Name** Mckelvy

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** As an avid outdoors man and offroader I'm beginning to feel more and more clostraphobic in this large green state of ours. Everytime you turn around another outdoor venue is being closed down, locked up or reappropriated and it's getting to be a frightening trend. Please let my self and the rest of the offroad community know what we can do to save this state as a 4wd friendly place.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 593

**Last Name** Boyle

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** I understand the value of training the Marines need in order to prepare for todays battlefield, but the proposed expansion of 29 palms is not acceptable. Johnson Valley is one of California, if not the countries, greatest OHV destinations. Please leave this area open to the plubic and find an alternative location for the 29 palms expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 594

**Last Name** Rector

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Johnson Valley has become one of the best used public lands in this country. In a time where public lands seem to be closing quite often its nice to have a place that we the people can use for off road racing and recreation. Closing this down would be harmful to the community and business's in near by towns. Please reconsider your choice and allow us to keep this land open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 595

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Should we expand our training for fighting, or keep some of the best reasons for fighting? American freedom, for individuals and families, shines in desert offroad areas like nowhere else. When the Marines fly over Means Dry Lake in their F18's, they can look down and see families happily camped in the wilderness, enjoying their freedom in a unique way that is the envy of the world. The King Of The Hammers competitions are just getting started, attracting money and talent from all over the country, and are a spectacular celebration of the American Way. When young men and women weigh the decision to enlist in the armed services, the tie breaker could well be the memories they have of the freedom and magic of Johnson Valley. Please leave it to the civilian world as a wilderness where Americans of all ages can go to play, relax and grow as individuals.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 596

**Last Name** Rector

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Johnson Valley has become one of the best used public lands in this country. In a time where public lands seem to be closing quite often its nice to have a place that we the people can use for off road racing and recreation. Closing this down would be harmful to the community and business's in near by towns. Please reconsider your choice and allow us to keep this land open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 597

**Last Name** Morrow

**First Name** Garrett

**Comment** Please do not shut down Jonhson Valley OHV area. It is the greatest off-roading area in the country and shutting it down would create far reaching consequences.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Thank you for your comment. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 598

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Taking Johnson valley away from me is taking one of my favorite camping spots away the area provides off roading at its finest and I usually go 6 times a year out to Camp Rock road and Bessemer mine road.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 599

**Last Name** Hischar

**First Name** George

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a great place for families to go and experience the great sport of four wheeling. I still have yet to make it to the famous Hammers race, but I will next year for sure. We are a responsible group that are losing our land hand over fist. There are fewer and fewer places that we can legally go and enjoy our sport. Please do not take this away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 600

**Last Name** Lobato

**First Name** Derek

**Comment** Please do not close johnson valley ohv area! Its the most important recreation area in the entire US. All of us wheelers strongly support the US military but this would be like taking away the super bowl for us! Its such a large contributor to the economy in southern Cal as well.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID**

601

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Thank you for taking the time to hear public comments on the Johnson Valley expansion. I have traveled from South Carolina with my family twice to enjoy the undeniable beauty of this area. We are very active OHV users and would hate to see such a wonderful OHV accesable area closed as so many across the country have. I have attended an annual OHV race on two other ocasions with friends and the event seems to be gaining in popularity every year. I have to imagine the influx of thousands of spectators has to make a noticable difference in the local area's economy. I understand the need to train our troops in the most realistic manner possible. Please be absolutly sure that you weigh all of your options in the expansion and understand that the area is extremely important to our community. Thank You, Donnie Buhrmaster

**Date Comment Received**

4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

<b>Comment ID</b>	602
<b>Last Name</b>	Weber
<b>First Name</b>	Marie
<b>Comment</b>	<p>For over 50 years my family and I, 3 sons and 6 grandchildren, have been enjoying the California desert, on motorcycles, jeeps and bicycles. We appreciate the beauty, the isolation and the freedom to do so. We have always left the area as we found it. We DON'T mind sharing it with the natural or man- made inhabitants. But now it seems our taxes are being paid to not preserve this wonderland of beauty and fun, but to restrict our access and enjoyment. I am a HUGE supporter of our Armed Forces, no matter their affiliation, Marines, Air Force, Army and Navy, and truly feel, between shutting down viable bases in budget cut backs and restructuring base assignments, i.e. Miramar and El Toro, now they are impeding on area not necessary to train and exercise troops. The base at Camp Pendleton is huge and incorporates significant beach front property necessary for training and includes private military campgrounds. Twenty-Nine Palms is also a large base and has other options, and its expansion is questionable. If there are violations of encroachment, please severely punish the violators, not the supportive, peace loving ORV devotees. Check out our desert camps and witness for ourselves the HUNDREDS of American flags flying proudly in our areas. Please consider other or no expansion in the true spirit of sharing this amazing country and land with the thousands of people who enjoy it's beauty and support your efforts, salute your commitment and appreciate and acknowledge your sacrifices. Please do not limit the freedoms you so valiently represent by disallowing our freedoms to use and enjoy our own land. Thank you.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/13/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.)</p>

because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 603

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I take my vacation every year from seattle down to johnson valley. I have a lot of great memories on the lake bed and would be truly devistated if 29 palms took over the land. It is a great venue for our sport and also a great place to go camping with my family. I hope you take all the people into consideration before choosing to take this from all the people that love it so much

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 604

**Last Name** Cox

**First Name** Jpseph S.

**Comment** I am outraged by our Government's continued expansion of our military. We already have the best, most well-trained military in the world and I do not see nor understand any reasoning behind acquiring more public-use lands for training purposes...especially with the recent horrific press

surrounding the "Kill Team." That is what I'm afraid our continued expansion is creating, because we don't have the safeguards in place to prevent such happenings or to deal with them when they have.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 605

**Last Name** Leach

**First Name** Travis

**Comment** Please realize how much this ohv area means to the public using it. Its a chain reaction of impact to the offroad industry if the land is lost.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 606

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it concerns. I am a man of few words. The closure of any public OHV lands disturbs me and I feel strongly against it so I will say a few things. My family and I like to watch the new and upcoming rock racing

motorsport that takes place at Johnson Valley. We as a family would like to use the OHV for a family trip outside of our home state of Oregon. My son should be able to use this land as well when he comes of age. We need to create more OHV land for people, not take it away. People need a place to recreate legally now that many places are becoming restricted to public use. Keep local revenue coming into the area. Many people are against hard economic times and this could be the downward turning point for many. Keep the American people free, free to use the land that they know and love. Bodhi Long and family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 607

**Last Name** Cox

**First Name** Brett

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley open to the public. It's a treasured venue in the outdoor rec community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 608

**Last Name** Christianson

**First Name** James

**Comment** I am requesting that an alternative to the Johnson Valley OHV area be found for your training facility. The Johnson Valley and the "Hammers" OHV are the Southern California destination of choice for the true "Off-Road" enthusiasts and to lose a mecca like this would bring us one step closer to the demise of the sport. Please allow us to preserve the Johnson Valley as the unique and beautiful place that it is. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 609

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep this area open to the public. The offroad community does a lot to support the area and we do keep it clean and repair what we disturb. We teach our children and our future about the environment and how to protect it. I am a Navy vet and wish that you hear our plead to keep this area open. Thank you- Semper Fi

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 610

**Last Name** Norby

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** As much as I support the armed forces and country I also highly support off-road recreation. The Johnson Valley area has exploded into a new OHV sport in the last few years and is promoting more economic activity than ever. These activities bring revenue to the local area in forms of tourism, travel, business, etc along with various business across the country also. Please consider keeping what part of Johnson Valley how it is, public. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 611

**Last Name** Ciecior

**First Name** Colin

**Comment** To whom this may concern, To me, Johnson Valley represents something of a Mecca to off-road motor sports. A mecca that I have not even personally had the pleasure to visit...yet. Some day I hope I will be able to experience the wonders that Johnson Valley has to offer with my family. Unfortunately places such as this seem to be disappearing all too quickly across the U.S.A. Please re-evaluate your proposal to close of much of Johnson Valley for the military so that myself and generations to come can enjoy this spectacular area of our country. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 612

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have never been able to wheel the hammers and am hopeful that I can someday. There are not many places like this to wheel left for us so please don't take it away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 613

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This is for the johnson valley do not want to lose this land it holds a awesome event every year wheeling is something i enjoy and would love to

wheel here someday so please do not shut it down its good to see wonderful people come together every year to watch this event u shut it down and can't meet new and exciting people that enjoy the sport like i do so leave it alone thanks and later.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 614

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I traveled from New Hampshire for the first time to Johnson Valley in February to spectate the King of the Hammers race. It was easily the most exciting adventurous amazing trip I have ever taken. I have never been somewhere so wide open where you could view so many miles of pure nature. While visiting the beautiful scenery of the lake bed, I planned to make the trip every year with my friends. Hopefully next year even tow my truck out to offroad on the most famous trails in the country. Please keep the OHV area open so that my friends and I can continue to have such an awesome experience for years to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 615

**Last Name** Burns

**First Name** Ray

**Comment** Americans from across this great nation spend their summer vacations with family members building relationships that span generations in parks like Johnson Valley Recreational Park. I for one have witnessed that life building experience and will pass that onto my children. If this park closed to our favorite pastime, like so many others it would simply be a tragic loss for a significant part of society. Please don't close this park to my family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 616

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I use Johnson Valley a lot and would be very upset if it were closed. Please consider how valuable this land is for us and leave it available.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 617

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take away our public lands. We will not have anywhere to go, if you keep closing down all the trails.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 618

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i have been going to Johnson Valled since i was very young. My fater used to take me out there and we would go off roading and hiking in the mountains. I now have kids of my own and take them out with me. There are VERY few areas left where a family can go out and experiance the desert, go off roading and spend time together. There are no other area's in the U.S. that has the same terrian as Johnson Valley (the hammers) i have been to different areas on the west coast and been offroading in many areas, nothing compares to johnson valley and nothing can replace it. Please rethink your expansion and leave johnson valley open to the public. Thank you, Jason Brown

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 619

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley Recreation area open for the public to come and congregate with each other. It has been a place where I've made some lifelong friends and meet up with my buds from the past who have moved elsewhere. It's one the most amazing places to enjoy the outdoors and not have to spend thousands of dollars to have such enjoyment. This place means a lot to me and my family. I support the Marines and our Military with letters to the soldiers through my church but please don't take this land from us. Thank You,  
Robinson

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 620

**Last Name** Cummings

**First Name** Jack

**Comment** I have two nephews in the Marines; I support who you are and what you do. I just hope rather than expand in Johnson Valley you could use one of your other locations for expansion. While I know many of your locations are desolate similar to the Johnson Valley area the Johnson Valley area is a location that thousands of us depend on for recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 621

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been to Johnson Valley just once in 2010. it was one of the best experiences of my life. The views and trails are incredible. I am returning in the near future with my son and family. Please do not close the trails so that i can show my family the beauty of Johnson Valley. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 622

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to ask that you keep the hammer's area open to the public. We have life long memories that we make there each year. My kid has been going with me wheeling there for years and look forward to it each year. There is not to many places left to enjoy dirt sports don't make this just another area checked off some list of use to wheel there.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 623

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Rock crawling is a huge part of my life, and I'd be crushed if the Hammers were closed to us, especially if it were to happen before I ever get a chance to go there. Please continue considering alternatives so this area can remain open to OHV's.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS

analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 624

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We usually visit Johnson Valley once a year traveling from Virginia. It's a great vacation site and we enjoy camping and wheeling there. I hope it stays open to the public forever.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 625

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep open for people who physically cannot get to these areas due to a disability. Closing is NOT the answer! Responsible use is! Responsible use is happening all over the country. Thank you. Eli Harning PhD ABD

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 626

**Last Name** Pahls

**First Name** Christian

**Comment** For the last ten years,I have spent the week between Christmas and New Years with my family in the JV OHV area. We enjoy this area and make the trip from Oregon every year.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 627

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** the johnson valley ohv area is one of the few remaining areas still open to this type of recreation, and is the only one in the southern california area. if this place were to be closed to the public it would hurt the local busnissess, like the gas stations and stores, it would also hurt almost all offroad companys due to the lack of places to go. i know that if the johnson valley ohv area was closed i would not go offroading as often because i cannot afford to drive out of state.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a

direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 628

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Leave Johnson Valley alone. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 629

**Last Name** Barr

**First Name** Erin

**Comment** I have been coming to Johnson Valley OHV area for the last 4 years to Jeep with friends and i have to say that we here in Nebraska would be crushed to know that we could not get together in California to do what we love. I have to drive 30 plus hours each way, usually through bad weather to get there but, it is very worth it to me and my friends. We spend money supporting the small towns around the area as well. Please consider leaving this very sacred land open to the public and myself for recreational use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 630

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As I for one appreciate everything our armed forces do for us.. I think this would such a big mistake taking away this respected resource. Many people use this land for recreation. Alot of turists flock there also.. Its not just the dollar factor but thr respect you should have for us as well as we have for you. Thank you for your time Wade

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 631

**Last Name** mullins

**First Name** byron

**Comment** Please keep this land open to the public. We are loosing too much public land as it is. Pretty soon we won't have any land left to go out and enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 632

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the OHV community, my family and I travel from Montana to enjoy this area as much as possible. It would be a huge loss to the OHV family with ANY closure to this area, we hope to be able to continue to enjoy this unique area for many more years to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 633

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** California has enough problems with revenue why take revenue for the local community there and turn it to government money spending.I personally plan to make it to Johnson Valley on vacation in the next couple of years all the way from OH..It must be a pretty good natural attraction when people from the east coast visit those grounds.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 634

**Last Name** Brower

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Please save Johnson Valley, keep it open to the public for recreational use. It is very important to the 4x4 community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 635

**Last Name** Cunningham

**First Name** Brad

**Comment** Please reconsider your thoughts around taking the Johnson Valley away from the general public and incorporating it into the 29 Palms Combined Arms Exercise area. As a Marine who spent time stationed in 29 Palms I appreciate the desire for more area to train in, however I also appreciate the fact that recreational areas for taxpayers are becoming harder to find, especially if your interests lie in off road motor sports. Please allow this spectacular area continued to be enjoyed by the entire public. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 636

**Last Name** Phillips

**First Name** Kenneth

**Comment** Johnson valley is a very important recreational area for my family and thousands of others. Acres to these types of land are becoming more and more restrictive all the time. Help us to be able to exercise our freedoms we have in America!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 637

**Last Name** Balducci

**First Name** Dominic

**Comment** I am an avid off-roader and I hope that Johnson Valley is kept open to the public. I am originally from Pennsylvania, and after joining the pit crew for a team that races in King of the Hammers, Johnson Valley has become a huge part of my life. In the last 12 months I have made 3 trips to Johnson Valley while still living 2,500 miles away in Pennsylvania. The King of the Hammers event has become the biggest event in the offroad world. Even on the east coast people talk about it year round. I have witnessed first hand the rapid growth of offroad racing on the east coast as a result of King of the Hammers. Not only does this race provide a great form of entertainment for thousands, it has kept the offroad industry growing even in this poor economy. My move to Arizona from Pennsylvania is a result of my involvement in King of the Hammers and contacts that I gained through the race. I have been working in the offroad industry as a fabricator since 2008, and if it weren't for King of the Hammers I think the industry would really be struggling, however it is thriving. As big as the King of the

Hammers race is, the thousands of other people who recreate in Johnson Valley every weekend would be devastated by losing this land. At the rate we are losing access to public land, it would be a shame to lose an area that is so critical to the success of an entire industry. Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 638

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I owe The ability to voice my opinion of this land acquisition to the men and women who have defended my freedom. With that said, THANK YOU. We as a large group who enjoy using public land for ohv purposes almost NEVER have the opportunity to acquire "new" lands to use. We must protect and cherish the grounds we have now. Please keep Johnson Valley open for ohv use so our younger generations may experience what we have.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 639

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I got my start in fabrication by building a Jeep with my Grandpa and Dad. I have since turned my love for welding and fabrication into a career as a Welding Engineer. I am continually building and modifying my vehicle to do better offroad. I live my week so that I can go out and explore the backcountry and the trails less traveled on the weekends. I hope to take my Jeep to every off road park in the country. I fortunately made Paragon before it was shut down but I missed out on Tellico. I am hoping to make it out west for a trip this next year. The money that I along with others who love this sport and hobby put out is never an investment that we hope to get back. It is always given for the next big thrill and wonderful sight that we might see while we are exploring the wild. Thanks for saving this land for future generations to enjoy and explore.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 640

**Last Name** Hurrey

**First Name** Andrew

**Comment** I enjoy the times we get to spend at the hammer trails and being in the 4 wheel drive industry I feel shutting a place as important as Johnson valley down will be detrimental for mine and many other individuals livelihoods. Please find somewhere else to do your training.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 641

**Last Name** Correll

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I am writing this to express my strong desire that Johnson Valley OHV area be kept open and available to the public for public use. I do understand the needs of the Military to expand training grounds and I am so grateful as an American to every member of the United States military for their efforts and sacrifice. I would aks that the the area be either managed as multiple use which could offer OHV users an alternative area to recreate in. Or the the area could remain open as it is now and other areas be considered for use by the Marine Corp. We enjoy our one week a year that we are able to visit Johnson Valley. Again, I do appreciate the need for more space for large scale training. I just ask that some arrangement could be reached with BLM to assure there will be a future for OHV in Southern California, or more specifically, Johnson Valley. Sincerely Scott Correll

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 642

**Last Name** Hoton

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a great multi-purposed recreational park and it would be tragic if OHV's were alienated from using the park. It would be an even greater tragedy if Johnson Valley were to be closed all together. It is a great part of the country that should be enjoyed by everyone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 643

**Last Name** Mullikin

**First Name** Brad

**Comment** I visit Jonhson Valley at least once a year on vacation. It is one of my favorite places to go for a week and relax.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 644

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** You can't take JV away from off road community, to many open off orad arear's are being taken and JV is out in the middle of no where and no around anyone. Please keep JV open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 645

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** a

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 646

**Last Name** york

**First Name** stacy

**Comment** Hi! I'm a wife and mother who loves the outdoors! We have based our parenting on spending time with our kids in the outdoors and learning/appreciating nature. Enjoying the King of Hammers and its race course is just part of our experience. Our 2 year old son falls asleep to off road videos every night. He says, "mommy I want to race that when I get older." Closing these lands will shatter one of his dreams. Please consider how many families will be effected as you make decisions about land closures! Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 647

**Last Name** busch

**First Name** jim

**Comment** The Hammers offroad trails are the best OHV trails in the entire world. It is very important for these trails to remain open to the public. Public lands were protected for the public to use, and should remain open to the public. If the military needs additional lands for training they should look into acquiring private lands for this purpose. In fact the Hammers are so special to the offroad community that events such as the King of the Hammers race draws tens of thousands of people to this area each year. I look forward to making the several thousand mile journey to this very special place next year. In conclusion it is very important to keep the Hammers open to the public. Thank you for your time. Regards, Jim Busch

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 648

**Last Name** Kennedy

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** There is always a need for military training. But, expansion should be limited to what is truly needed. Our United States is growing larger, hence

the open ranges are getting smaller. Please take the time to discuss with the community what is to transpire. And please listen to us in that regard.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 649

**Last Name** Quirk

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** Johnson Valley, ie: the Hammers is the pinnacle of rock crawling, the best and hardest trails in the world. I live 2 hours from them and is one of the reason I retired from the Marine Corps and stayed out here. I live to work on my rig and take it out there to see what my ingenuity can come up with. It's one of the last great bastions of wild you can go to, no camp site, no camp grounds, no facilities, just you and nature and not that warm fuzzy stuff most like to see, but some of the harshest conditions in this country.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 650

**Last Name** Joyner

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** The off road community has taken many hits in the last decade. The "public" land that we cherish is being taking away from us. The off road community are championing for not only a place to enjoy our love for the sport but also for good stewardship of the land. We appreciate you hearing us out over the Johnson Vally area. I hope for everyone's sake we all can come to an agreement that helps both of our groups out because as we all

know no one is making any more land so we all have to work together to make the best of what we have. Due to the economic downturn of late i was not able to attend the events in Johnson Valley in the last few years but I hope that I have not missed out on the experience all together. This area brings people from all over the country and it would be a tragedy to have lost it altogether. Thank you for not writing us off and taking the time to listen to our comments. I hope for my sake, the off road community's sake and our kids sake that we can share the land. Thank you for your time Mike from Charleston SC

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 651

**Last Name** Goodman

**First Name** Jonathan

**Comment** I travel to Johnson Valley every year, and I have centered vacation time around the King of the Hammers event twice. I have even considered buying income/vacation property in the area as a result of the value this region has for recreational off road vehicles. This region is one of the world's foremost destinations for extreme off road vehicles. It's loss to the OHV community would be a disaster. This would be like closing Hawaii to surfing or Yosemite to rock climbing. Although I fully support all efforts to prepare our troops for the battles they face abroad, I have to hope that there

would be another alternative to using this area for that purpose. Right now, across the country, there are battles being waged by all sorts of competing interest groups who, for one reason or another, are trying to limit the access of Off-Highway Vehicle enthusiasts to public land. Johnson Valley has represented one of our few safe havens, where a healthy balance between recreational use and environmental preservation has been enjoyed by all for many years. Although freedom loving 4 wheelers everywhere would agree that we fully support the mission of the military, to lose this area because of it's value to the adjacent military base would be a sadly ironic blow to our battle-at-large for public land access nation wide. Please consider our battle for freedom here at home as you prepare for battle abroad.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 652

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** keep the hammers open! having access to one of the most remote beautiful places in the world is so important. taking away out legal trails will only discourage people to abide by the law and trespass on private property. keeping the hammers open allows thousands of people to enjoy this beautiful country and explore it legally with our rigs.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

<b>Comment ID</b>	653
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Public land is at a premium. Try to wheel or do any off road activities east of the Mississippi. All the public land has been leased out to the highest bidder, who closes this "public" land off to the public. Surely there is an area that can be used in the National Training Center area.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/13/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	654
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Public land is at a premium. Try to wheel or do any off road activities east of the Mississippi. All the public land has been leased out to the highest bidder, who closes this "public" land off to the public. Surely there is an area that can be used in the National Training Center area.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/13/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 655

**Last Name** Glumac

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am a patriotic American and an off-road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple-use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training, please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area annually, and spend thousands of dollars of my hard-earned money each trip. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off- road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces, please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines. This is far from a not in my backyard plea. Please do come to Colorado to train. I am certain there are lands here similar to Afghanistan.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a

direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	656
<b>Last Name</b>	Sievert
<b>First Name</b>	Samuel
<b>Comment</b>	I have been building a Willys Jeep since I was 15 years old, and the reason I started this build was to take it off road, and on my short list of places I wanted to off road, Johnson Valley was one of the places. Please keep it open to OHV users as well. Thank you Samuel Sievert
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/13/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 657

**Last Name** Richards

**First Name** Timothy

**Comment** My family has been coming to the Johnson Valley area for over 10 years patronizing the local businesses. We enjoy this area so much that we drive over 10 hours each way. Our business over the years has helped the poor economy. I don't think bombing the desert is helping the economy. I don't understand how we say we are taking troops out of war areas but we need additional land to train them on. What has happened to all the areas where the armed services have moved out of? There are many abandoned buildings and the economy of the area is worse off than it was before they moved in. Why not go back to some of those areas and use them? Keep the public land open to the tax payers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 658

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I know that you are probably wondering what an individual from TN has to do with comments on Johnson Valley California.....well it has to do with the money I spend to come to your great state! I travel multiple times a year to participate in events and trail rides on iconic trails in California including Johnson Valley. Last year I tallied the travel expenses that I incurred in California and it was close to 15,000 dollars. And this was spent on fuel and at local retuarants and hotels. Loosing Johnson Valley would certainly limit the amount of times that I travel to California, and possibly remove it from my travel plans all together. Now I am sure that this may seem small change, one person changing vacation plans, but I know for a fact that there would be hundreds, if not thousands of fellow 4 wheelers who would feel the same way. Please reconsider the closure of Johnson Valley to OHV traffic.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 659

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family has been coming to the Johnson Valley area for over 10 years patronizing the local businesses. We enjoy this area so much that we drive over 10 hours each way. Our business over the years has helped the poor economy. I don't think bombing the desert is helping the economy. I don't understand how we say we are taking troops out of war areas but we need additional land to train them on. What has happened to all the areas where the armed services have moved out of? There are many abandoned buildings and the economy of the area is worse off than it was before they moved in. Why not go back to some of those areas and use them? Keep the public land open to the tax payers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a

direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 660

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern, I am a proud American who happens to enjoy the sport of off-road racing. My dream has been to attend a King of the Hammers event in the future. This event is a cornerstone of industry networking, research, and development. While I appreciate the necessity of your goals, please leave Johnson Valley open to us. The value we as members of the off-road community put on this area is not not measurable. I cannot stress this enough, and I hope my opinion has some weight on your decision. Thank you, Kevin

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 661

**Last Name** Stewart

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** My family has been coming to the johnson valley area for over 10 year patronizing the local businesses. We enjoy this area so much that we drive over 10 hours each way. Our business over the years has helped the poor economy. I don't think bombing the dessert is helping the economy. I don't understand how we say we are taking troops out of war areas but we need additional land to train them on. what has happened to all the areas where the armed services have moved out of? There are many abandoned buildings and the economy of the area is worse off than it was before they

moved in. Why not go back to some of those areas and use them? Keep the public land open to the tax payers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 662

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area and it's established trails are a feature found no where else. The area draws me and a large group of friends from 600 miles away. Please leave the area open so that all may enjoy!

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 663

**Last Name** theriault

**First Name** spencer

**Comment** Having this area open to the public is key. I look forward every year to vacation here with the family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 664

**Last Name** Marshall

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** To whom it may concern; I am writing you in response for the proposed closure of Johnson ORV area. The area is a popular and well used recreational area for all manner of off-road enthusiasts and outdoor hobbyist. The park itself is become a scarce commodity as more and more ORV lands are closed to public access. The area not only provides the off-

road and outdoor hobbyist a great place to enjoy, but their visitation brings income and visitation to the area. As a supervised government land area it also promotes stable and responsible land usage. Closure of the lands would be detrimental to thousands of visitors, the ORV hobby, and the local economy. I urge you to not close the lands for ORV usage. Sincerely, Scott Marshall

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 665

**Last Name** Bautista

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley open to public use. It is the last of what recreational land is left and it would be devastating to see it closed. My family utilizes all of the remaining OHV areas in California, JV is the BEST for fourwheelers an desert lovers alike. Mike B So Cal

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 666

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The hammers has allowed me to meet some great people that have made a difference in my personal life. Losing the OHV would have a huge impact on others like myself that have learned some much from the people I have meet. I hope you reconsider using this land for military use. It will be of better used if it's keep as public land use.Thank you very much for taking the time to hear from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 667

**Last Name** Zuzich

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** Before February 2011, I was not overly concerned with the possibilty of losing access to The Hammers, in Johnson Valley. That changed when I was there for the King of the Hammers, and I got to see just how beautiful and awesome this area really is. Since I have been back home from my trip to Johnson Valley all I seem to be thinking about is how soon I can get back out there, I am to the point where I am considering moving from Chicago-land to SoCal just for The Hammers and the open desert of Johnson Valley. I can't begin to imagine how disappointing it would be to lose access to this land for the families that use it frequently, I can however say that I now know how special of a place Johnson Valley is and I would be heart broken if it was taken away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 668

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am from North Carolina and came to Johnson Valley for the first time this year to run King of The Hammers. I have wheeled all over the east cost but this was the first time I have wheeled on the west cost and I loved it. I would love to come back to Johnson Valley to trail ride and go camping. I know what it is like to loose a riding area as good as Johnson Valley because just a few years ago we lost Tellico on the east cost and let me tell you it sucks. We use to go there at least once a month and now its gone. don't get me wrong new riding areas have opened up but nothing will take the place of Tellico. There are places that have harder trails and there are places that have better camping but there will never be a place that has the combination Tellico had. I believe that if Johnson Valley gets closed down the west cost will go thru the same thing we had to go thru new areas will open but nothing will be able to take the place of Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 669

**Last Name** Smith

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** To whom it may concern; I'm writing in regard to any possible closure of the Johnson Valley OHV area. While I appreciate and understand the need

for our nations military to have adequate areas for training, I urge you to consider looking for areas other than Johnson Valley. My family and I are avid off- roaders. We travel throughout the western US multiple times a year in search of trails. The Johnson Valley area is unique in our sport and cannot be replaced. Loosing those lands would be a great loss to our sport and the local economy. Thank you, Brian Smith

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 670

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** Please keep all of the Johnson Valley OHV area open, I grew up enjoying this area and hope to enjoy it with my kids.

**Date Comment Received** 4/13/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 671

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Shelli

**Comment** Please keep all of the Johnson Valley OHV area open! We love and take care of our desert!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 672

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Having been an off-road enthusiast for almost 15 years this is one of the few locations I still want to make it to. As being a United States Navy Sailor I understand the importance to have a viable place to train. While Johnson Valley OHV Park is the ideal location to provide training to my fellow brothers and sisters in arms, there is a way to allow both the use of the OHV Park while training is not being conducted and also allow for training to continue. While training evolutions are often subject to change on short notice, I strongly believe we can work in harmony to ensure training continues and there is continuing access to the OHV area for the public. The public would have to recognize that military training must come first and there is always the possibility of training that must be completed at short notice, there is a vast support for the military in the off-road community and I am sure together we can work a proposal to ensure continued access. As a fellow member of the armed forces I ask and strongly encourage the Marines to evaluate all options, this location is a viable location for the public as a whole from the off-road enthusiasts to hikers. I am sure as a community we can come to an option that would benefit both the public and the Corps.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 673

**Last Name** Lee

**First Name** Jesse

**Comment** In all due respect, I don't see why it is necessary to expand 29 Palms to the west into the Johnson Valley OHV area. To me, Johnson Valley is the whole reason, I still 4 wheel; it has the best terrain for the type of offroading that I and many others seek. I along with many others enjoy the area and the openness and the sense of freedom it provides. Overtaking the OHV area would also negatively impact the towns in the surrounding areas, with the loss of revenue from the offroading community. There must be an alternative to the base expansion. Why not expand the base to the east? Again in closing, please do not expand the base to the west and over take the Johnson Valley area that so many of us enjoy both for recreation and as a source of revenue. -Jesse Lee

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 674

**Last Name** Griffith

**First Name** Clint

**Comment** I live in the naboring town Lucerne, the town lives on the people that recreat in in JV. And I am an avid off roader and have been enjoying JV my hole life and I want to share it with my kids. Thank you, Clint Griffith

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 675

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The hammers is home to many offroad enthusiasts worldwide. It gives them the one thing to hope for once a year, it has been a support to the land/trail use organizations to promote responsible & respectable land use.l

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 676

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I put in my plea to you to please keep the Johnson Valley open to public OHV use. There is getting to be less and less land for public OHV use and to take away more of it would be great sadness to thousands of people who visit and enjoy the area. The government is slowly shutting OHV use down

across the United States and it's only fair to at least keep what is left open to public use. Thank You for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 677

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson valley, Means dry lake bed Svra area has been a part of four wheeling since I can remember. It is a destination that fellow Four Wheelers and I talk about with a kind of awe reserved for only the most challenging destinations across the country. Especially with the list of those destinations becoming shorter and shorter each year. And now since the start of the King Of The Hammers race it is a place that tens of thousands of people plan and prepare for the entire year preceding the race. It is a place that I could not wait to take my truck to as a kid, and is a place I hope is still around for my son and following generations to enjoy. Thank you for your time. Daniel

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 678

**Last Name** day

**First Name** justin

**Comment** johnson valley is a public place and should stay that way. we are losing so much land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 679

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I have been wanting to take a trip to Johnson valley but with our busy schedule just have not been able to. Then comes the fact that the military is wanting to take back the land! My family and I really want to make the trip.... Sooooo please reconsider the land accusation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 680

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley ORV area is a very important area for Four wheelers from all over North America, For the Marines it is just another few hundred acres to "simulate Afghanistan" or whatever the Exercise might be, but for People

like myself it offers a diverse Desert terrain unrivaled by any other public sanctioned ORV area. For many regular working guys ,like myself who are out turning wrenches on their old Jeeps it is a 'Bucket list' kind of destination. Please find a way to keep the Hammers open. Thanks Eh.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 681

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep the great Johnson Valley open it means the world to me. I travel 10 hrs two times a year to Off Road in the Valley. It is one of the last great off road testing area. The place is just an amazingly fun place to visit and test my Jeep.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 682

**Last Name** adcock

**First Name** knute

**Comment** please keep johnson valley open it is a very great ohv area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 683

**Last Name** Cooper

**First Name** Nicholas

**Comment** 4wheeling is mine and my family and friends main hobby. The recreation, friendships, and environmentalism that goes along with this hobby is unique in and of itself. I have not had the chance to experience the deserts of Southern California but I hope to in the future. Many of the vast areas that used to be open for responsible recreational access in the east have been closed down and used for logging, mining, or development. It would be a shame to see our own government closing its citizens out of one of our most precious natural resources; FREEDOM. In The USA we have the freedom to recreate as we choose, and the off road motorsports community is unique to the USA. I hope the Marines can find a suitable solution for land to use for training.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps also understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 684

**Last Name** Larrabure

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open. It is a great place that we should all be able to use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 685

**Last Name** schellpeper

**First Name** travis

**Comment** Johnson Valley (the hammers) is/are important part of off roading and a true family adventure spot. one of the last for southern californians like myself. I travel all the way to NAWS China Lake for work, to do live demolition and live fire training - There is a ton of "closed to public" land there that could be re- utilized for military only use- if my unit travels that far for just a couple events, maybe you could into that area? Thanks, -Travis

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your suggestion for a project alternative. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a

significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 686

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hello. My name is Shawn Hallford, Corporal in the United States Marine Corps. and also an avid offroader. Johnson Valley needs to be left as public land. It is home to the biggest race in all of North America, and it recreational use is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of American citizens each year. Hasn't the average American sacrifice enough for the government? Haven't Americans lost enough public lands and rights to all the special interest groups and government agencies? By taking this landing you are turning your back, on every person we've sworn to protect. Now protect our PUBLIC lands and let us enjoy whats left of them. Thank you and I prayer you take everyone comments into consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 687

**Last Name** yeamans

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I would hate for this to be shut down before I get a chance to enjoy it with my family. I live in southern oregon and I have seen so many ohv areas shut down over the years I must travel to enjoy my 4 wheeling and camping! I have plans to visit this ohv park this summer. There has to be other places for the marines. Richard Yeamans

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 688

**Last Name** Tanzer

**First Name** John

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern, Please take under advisement that I recommend Johnson Valley remain and OHV access area. At the very least, please continue to grant OHV access to some areas, if all that are currently used can no longer be. We appreciate that you've allowed us to use this land to this point and wish to continue doing so. Our sport fuels are suffering economy, especially with events such as King of the Hammers. The economic impacts have been proven to be significant and the time spent with families and friends is important to so many of us while using our OHV's. Thank you for your time, John Tanzer

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 689

**Last Name** Fowler

**First Name** Raji

**Comment** Johnson Valley is one of the premiere spots for off road motorsports, with it's wide offerings and diverse trails. It's also home to the King of the HAMMERS. This one time a year event brings people from all over the world, and literally turns this barren desert lake bed into a full fledge city. It also boosts the local economy. While I respect all those that serve this nation and respect the Marines and what they do, This is one issue that I will have to stand against. We have lost a huge amount of trails, and there will not be any more. I want to be able to know taht I can take my grand kids to this place and have them enjoy what the area has to offer. So please leave Johnson Valley alone, and let us have what few trails left to enjoy

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 690

**Last Name** fLECK

**First Name** John

**Comment** Johnson Vally OHV park is the most legendary in the world and an icon in the offroad community. To close it would be like shutting down Yellowstone national park. The people have been using it as a meeting place to have family get togethers and outings so our children grow up knowing what the outdoors is all about. It provides a safe and dedicated area for the sport and keeps people from going to non designated areas. If you value America and the way of life it offers, please dont shut down this Legendary location and put the people out cold. Regards John Fleck Back Country Binders 4x4 LLC.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 691

**Last Name** Bransford

**First Name** Jerry

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to

jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us. Thank you for your consideration. Jerry Bransford Escondido, California

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 692

**Last Name** Krob

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** Please let Johnson Valley be open to the people who finance it and enjoy it rather than closing it to allow future generations to be locked out of it also.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 693

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am hoping that the U.S. Marine Corps will reconsider expanding their training area into the Johnson Valley OHV area. Unfortunately, I have never been to Johnson Valley, but I hope to go soon, and I will hopefully be able to attend the 2012 King of the Hammers race. This race has been like a small stimulus package for the economy. Over the last several years, millions of dollars have been spent by private individuals looking to participate in this race, who would have otherwise been sitting on their money, and therefore not helping out the economy. Not to mention all the vendors and private citizens that attend the race (as well as the desert races held in the area), and all of the recreational users that use the area year round. If you do not have an alternative area to use, please consider only using the Johnson Valley area for a set amount of time every year, and leaving it open for public usage for the remaining days. This recreational area has so much value for the OHV community, it would be very sad to see it lost to all of us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 694

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open! I want to be able to take my kids there years from now to enjoy, there are plenty of other places the military can use for their training needs.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 695

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take any more land from us to enjoy and share with our families, the next generation. My hobby, offroading, relies on the few remaining areas open to the public. The entire Johnson Valley area holds multiple disciplines for numerous activities and all skill levels.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 696

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please reconsider your plan to close Lucerne Valley and use it for training. This is a valuable area for recreation off-road riding and would have a great impact on families that use this for their family sport. If this is gone families would have to drive to other states and lose their opportunity to do it on a regular basis. Riding as a young child with my family gave me a sense of responsibility and pride and I would hate to see that lost in our youth today. This land is more valuable as an area where families can experience the great outdoors than a military training facility. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 697

**Last Name** zanaria

**First Name** enea

**Comment** hi hallo I'm Enea from Italy, unfortunately I was not born in the states,I was not born in California,but I was born in a coutry where doesn't exist public land use,where doesn't exist ohv areas,where doesn't exist buggies world and where a guy that loves off road cars is not free to change the wheels on his car..... I went to see the last edition of KOH in february and many people tell me about the american army wants close Jhonson valley ohv area..... I ask you to leave Jhonson valley free to all the off road lovers,and don't became a off road jail like where I live. best regards Enea

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 698

**Last Name** Sherwood

**First Name** William

**Comment** Johnson Valley area has been one of the few close areas to ride motorcycles and ATVs for the local residents. I'm concerned that the Marine base is going to consume more and more of "OUR" the public's recreational land. I have heard of a area on base of very historical significance that is already off limits to the public. The Petroglyph site. Please leave the land for our use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 699

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson OHV is a big part of my off roading experience and I have had many fun memories there, and hope to create more in the future. Please leave Johnson Valley OHV open to us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 700

**Last Name** Brown

**First Name** Roger

**Comment** Please retain existing access to the OHV areas of Johnson Valley. This is one of the largest contiguous areas that we have left for recreation. There is enough room for thousands of people to visit and still have an area to themselves without being crowded into a small area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 701

**Last Name** Reynolds

**First Name** John

**Comment** Hello, My name is John and have been recreating in the Johnson Valley OHV area for almost 20 years with my four wheel drive vehicle. It is the only place like it in the world! 5 years ago, I became involved with the King of the Hammers race (in fact, I won it the first year)and have since started a business building race vehicles specifically for the K.O.H. race. They are high end race vehicles vehicles which can cost up to \$160,000 each. There are a lot of parts I buy from other sources and services I use from other shops to produce these race cars. I really hope you can find another way to expand your base without taken away our OHV area specifically, the area around Means dry lake and adjacent trails. Obviously, without the Johnson Valley Hammer trail system, my business will have to close it's doors. Thanks for considering my request, John Reynolds

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 702

**Last Name** Davies

**First Name** Russell

**Comment** To whom this information will be reviewed by, I have not set foot in the area of the Johnson Valley OHV Park for about 15 years. However, when I was attending California State University, San Bernardino, this area was occasionally used by the geology group for mapping activities and geomorphologic studies. As a geologist, the loss of this area could be replaced by other similar locales. However, as an off-highway enthusiast, I have enjoyed the Johnson Valley area on numerous occasions. With losses of other localities in the greater Los Angeles area, it would be a shame for this area to be no longer accessible. Thank you, Russell Davies

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 703

**Last Name** maier

**First Name** matt

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is

a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID**

704

**Last Name**

Clark

**First Name**

Richard

**Comment**

As an avid off road enthusiast and fan of public lands the Johnson valley area is truly one of the finest spots on the country. This site actually gets people into a new and expanding sport, it adds hundreds of thousands of dollars of revenue to the are from people traveling from all over the world to enjoy it. I come from a family with a very long and distinguished history of military service, so I absolutely understand the need for proper training grounds to help our troops. There are hundreds of other sites that could be used for similar large scale operations that would not take a bit out of the local economy and one of the fastest growing recreational activities in the country. Thank you for taking the time to consider the publics thoughts.

**Date Comment Received**

4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. as discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 705

**Last Name** McFadden

**First Name** Roger

**Comment** Over the past nine years I have dedicated a substantial amount of my annual income to building my trucks to drive the trails in Johnson Valley. It has become a staple in my family. We make the five hour drive several times a year weather to drive or spectate the Hammers have become a family tradition. I have made great memories with my family there and I hope they will be able to make memories with there children there also. Thankyou for taking the time to read this. please keep the hammers open to the public. Sincearly, Roger W. McFadden

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 706

**Last Name** salvador

**First Name** joe

**Comment** Johnson Valley must stay open for OHV. It is the mecca for us rock crawlers and offroad. It is the closest to the Los Angeles residents.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 707

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a proud American, and a desert lover, i wish to comment on the need to keep this land open for public/civilian use. i personally feel we can share the lands you help protect. we as desert lands users are supporters of our fine military and are wanting nothing but the best for our troops. but what are you protecting our lands for if we the public cannot use and enjoy it? hundreds of thousands of people use and enjoy this land each and every year, and have been for many, many years. we have had generations grow up and pass this opportunity onto their children. and now you want to completely shut it down for public use? did we not learn anything from the building of the berlin wall? with all the unoccupied lands california has to offer, you want an area that has been used and enjoyed by so many Americans for so many years? why? i for one can understand a compromise. like sharing the lands. when the military has a special need for it, use it for that short period, but let us have it back for the rest of the time. fencing off our deserts is nothing different than building a wall. are you getting this? at what point do you want the civilians to be at war with its own military? we wish to continue to support, but if this type of communistic take over continues, i feel it will hurt the relationship between civilians and the military. my family lives on the border of one of the finest Marine bases in the country. and i show and teach my 3 year old son about our troops whenever they drive through our town, or fly over head. not a fly over goes by that he does not wave to the sky in support. but i cannot know what he will think when i tell him we can no longer go to the desert to enjoy its beauty because the military took that land from us and closed it to the public. Please let him and his children grow up in a land that is still free, and free to use and see. your machines are quite capable of transporting our troops and weapons practice to REMOTE areas. Please do not take our accessible lands from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to

Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 708

**Last Name** Bishop

**First Name** Robb

**Comment** OK as a veteran (US Army, 1990-96, I trained with Marines at Kaneohe Bay & Camp Pendleton)I wholly understand the need for training areas however I am sure that there are some alternative sites for the Marines to use other than the Johnson Valley OHV park. Too many areas are closed off every year to the Civilian off road community. I have not yet had the opportunity to get down to CA to visit Johnson valley, one of my vacation goals is to attend the 2012 King of the Hammers Off Road race. If the Marines use this as a Training area, that dream will not be able to take place. Please consider alternate areas to use. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 709

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I live in florida for work reasons but my dream is to move out west just to be closer to the Johnson Valley OHV area. There is no place like it please dont close it.Here in florida everything is flat and they are closing everything down. I always hace to travel out of state to go wheel. I have alrady visited NC, KT, GA, AL,TN just to go wheeling this past 3 years and im already planning for the long haul to attend and spend a month at king of the hammers next year. It is a great sport and my kids love it. Keep it open and I'll be glad to help in any way I can. Thanks, Juan

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 710

**Last Name** moseley

**First Name** tasha

**Comment** With the downturn of the economy we have all had to do with alot less of the "extras" in life..with that said camping and offroading in places that don't charge admission, sell food for obscene amounts, or require you to provide ten proofs of id and insurance are few and far between. Johnson Valley is one of those few havens that have provided all of us with those "memories that will last a lifetime moments" like your kid riding a motorcycle for the first time, or when you went to your first offroad race. These things may sound trivial to the average city dweller that thinks camping is what you do at an overpriced hotel? But it's so much more for "us" the people in this industry. Not only is it our livelyhood but it's our passion the thing that we look forward to, plan for, prepare for, SAVE FOR...so that we can sit in our camping chairs while our 9 year old goes roundy round on her quad feeling that ever so rare moment of freedom seldom felt in this day and age, so we sit and watch them all enjoying, laughing, making new memories to bring back home with us so that we can begin again planning, preparing, SAVING, for the next time...don't take that away from "us" please....

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 711

**Last Name** Scharnweber

**First Name** Johnny

**Comment** After attending the public comment period meeting and reviewing all Alternatives for 29 Palms training land Acquisition I ask that you take Alternative #3. I am addamently opposed to more government closure of our public recreation areas as well as the negative impact closing any portion of Johnson Valley OHV area would have on the economy. This has been a popular recreation area for Southern California for many decades and the closure of this area would increase the potential for unlawful access which could lead to the death if a civilian were to come across live ammo. In addition, the loss of revenue would mean the loss of jobs for many Americans as some of the income derved from this area is what generates most of the income to certain business.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID**

712

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Every one has a bucket list and every trail in Johnson Valley is on mine! It is a one of a kind trail system, that a lot of blood, sweat, and tears have been given from the off road community to make these trails what they have become. Johnson Valley is used by many from Jeeping, Desert Racing, Geocashing, Camping, Hiking, & Dirt Bikes. It is also used by major off road companies for product testing. The King of the Hammers race brings people from all over the world, some who just want a chance to say they have been in the toughest off road race in the world, with a combination of rock crawling & desert racing. This is what being a American is all about, the freedom to be able to have the public land to enjoy. I'm not apposed to the expansion of the Marine Base but would prefer the expansion to be to the east and not affect Johnson Valley. I believe the expansion to the east, is in the best interest to every one! A bridge could be built for Amboy Road to allow military equipment to pass under (it could be possible for the off road community to help fund such a project), the train track could allow a delivery point for military equipment, & as for the natural gas line there are many different options! So Acquisition #3, I believe would be the best solution. KEEP JOHNSON VALLEY PUBLIC LAND.... SAVE THE HAMMERS....

**Date Comment Received**

4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 713

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please allow continued use of the Johnson Valley area for OHV users. I would like to be able to attend the King of the Hammers race next year and also to utilize the valley. Rus

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 714

**Last Name** Pulsford

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** Please keep this open to the public!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 715

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take this remaining desert area that I go to with my children. Many areas in the desert have been taken by well-meaning but misguided attempts to "save" the desert. This has closed the desert to use by me, my kids, and grandkids. Please do not take Johnson Valley OHV area. Thank you!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 716

**Last Name** Win

**First Name** Henry

**Comment** Please do not expand the 29 Palms Base into the area known as the Hammers. This area of Lucerne Valley is very important to me and to my club. We regularly make the trek down to the Hammers from San Luis Obispo, CA between 5 and 7 times a year. Every year we as outdoor enthusiasts lose more and more open land. What we have left is limited. Keep public lands open to the public and keep American dreams alive. Sincerely, H. Scott Winsor President Cal Poly Goats Off Road Club

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 717

**Last Name** MacLean

**First Name** Jan

**Comment** My lifelong dream is to visit the desert of California to explore the historic path of miners and the harshness of the environment there. I hope the area remains open to recreational vehicle useage for the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 718

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley open!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 719

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To my understanding, the Johnson Valley OHV area is being looked at by the Marines for use. I am a long time offroad enthusiast and although I personally have never been to Johnson Valley, it is one of my goals as an enthusiast. I am sure some medium can be reached between the enthusiasts like myself and the military but I would personally like to see the trails that many have learned to love and many more, like myself, will learn to love stay open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 720

**Last Name** POWERS

**First Name** GENE

**Comment** I MOVED UP TO THE HIGH DESERT TO ENJOY THE OUTDOORS. I HAVE 2 JEEPS AND 4 QUADS THAT WE RIDE OUT AT JOHNSON VALLEY. IT WOULD BE A LOST IF WE WERE TO LOSE OUR BACK YARD TO PLAY IN. I HAVE ALWAYS PACKED IT IN AND OUT.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 721

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I live 1800 miles away from the Johnson Valley OHV area but I have happily made the trip 3 times and would have made it many more times if I had the time and money. Each time myself and others have brought with us many hundreds of dollars that we have left with the nearby merchants. There simply is no other place in the US that has the terrain that JV has to offer. I plan to retire in 5 years or so and will relocate to a city that is near JV in order to have easier access to the OHV area. Please don't take this opportunity away from me and the countless others who share my respect and appreciation for the great gift of the JV OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 722

**Last Name** muchow

**First Name** scott

**Comment** My family loves the outdoors rock crawling and desert ridding are what we do for fun i live in northern ca and drive 2-3 times a year to play at the hammers a great place to hang out with family and friends>

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 723

**Last Name** Woodland

**First Name** William

**Comment** I under stand the proposed action of using parts of Johnson Valley for training purposes being a veteran my self, but i beleive it would be a bad idea to take away the area of the hammer trails in Jv.for the purpose of training...i beleieve there is an alternate area it that part of california that also would be better suited...the area of the hammer trailis a meca of the 4-Wheeling sport all of us wheelers all would like to make a trip to enjoy the johnson valley area and even attend the King of the hammers race ..I have been to the Boone rd. orv area riding with a friend in the past and had a

wonderful time while i was there,and would love to have the oppertunity to bring my own 4x4 down and enjoy this area also in the future.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley (including the Hammers area) and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 724

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand the need for our marines to have large areas to train, however I believe that there is more than enough abandoned land that the US government already owns that is available for large scale use of training. Every year we lose places to take our families to ride and fight a losing battle to keep our kids out of trouble and by buying this land you are only further eliminating options for our groups to have family oriented activities. I would hope that you could put forth the effort to find an area that is already owned by our government and use that area for your training.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. as discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 725

**Last Name** Pickens

**First Name** Josh

**Comment** Johnson Valley is one of the few remaining OHV recreational areas in the country. Please reconsider your agenda to close it down. i.e. don't fix it if it's not broke. 8-) Josh Pickens Grafton WV

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 726

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I write to ask the marines to not take over what little ohv land the U.S. taxpaying citizens have left. I traveled over 2000 miles last year just to visit the johnson valley ohv area from michigan. I plan on doing this again next year with my 3 year old son. I do not want to have to explain to him why we cancelled our trip.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 727

**Last Name** Hostinsky

**First Name** John

**Comment** This is a great place to go and have fun with my truck. I am hoping to make it there again from Virginia. It brings my family and I together. Thank you for keeping it open to all of our families. John

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 728

**Last Name** Howell

**First Name** Cody

**Comment** at this rate when i have kids and they are old enough to trail ride there wont be any trails left.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	729
<b>Last Name</b>	Kitson
<b>First Name</b>	James
<b>Comment</b>	<p>To whom it may concern, Our country continues to close state and federal recreation land to our citizens. As each recreation area is closed, those remaining open become more critical. Johnson Valley OHV area is the only OHV area of it's kind remaining in the entire United States. On the other hand, military facilities around the country have been closed and we continue to reduce the size of our military. Is it really necessary for a NEW bombing range versus reopening something that has already been closed? And does it have to be in the one and only area in the entire country that is open to the type of OHV activity that Johnson Valley offers? Please do not close down this area to public OHV use. Sincerely, Jim Kitson Davisburg, Michigan.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p> <p>As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late</p>

2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 730

**Last Name** Welch

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Dear Sirs, First, I would like to thank you for your service to our country. I have the utmost respect for the job that you do. Second, I would like to ask for your consideration in not expanding your training area into the OHV area at Johnson Valley. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 731

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I do not live close to Johnson Valley, but I have dreamed of being able to take my family there for years. Please, I am begging you, do not take this away from us. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 732

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an important area to me because it was my first real introduction to what enjoying the outdoors in California was like. I was amazed by the difference in landscape between there and my native state of Alabama. I make the trip out to enjoy the public land at Johnson Valley at least once a year and would be there much more often if it wasn't so far away. I would like to move out west eventually and a big factor in that decision is the vast amounts of public lands and the large system of OHV trails that those public lands host. Please keep Johnson Valley open to public OHV access; it would be wonderful for my kids to have the same access I did when they begin to enjoy OHV activities. Thank you for considering my words!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 733

**Last Name** weber

**First Name** adrian

**Comment** I have in the past and will continue to make the trip out to Johnson Valley for the King of The Hammers every year. Myself and my group of friend's inject thousands of dollars into the local economy but other than the financial aspect that having an OHV area brings, More importantly I would like the area to be available for my children to enjoy when they are of age, and even better, by children's children. Please don't take this away from them.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 734

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i live in ohio and have been saving for YEARS to try to come out there and play on some of the best rock crawling know to man, please dont take this 4wd paradise away from us and many generations to come. Thanks, Ian House

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 735

**Last Name** Hauser

**First Name** Christopher

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern: My wife and I currently live in the northeastern United States where OHV recreation is equal to poaching in some areas. There is little to no support OHV recreation in this area of the county. We are restricted to private lands to recreation, even though there is absolutely no shortage of State and Federal park land. One such public area in the mid- Atlantic, Tellico, has been closed off indefinitely due to questionable environmental findings that have yet to be released to the public. The failure to release this information is illegal in itself. The Johnson Valley OHV area provides a unique experience for everyone. I, one day, hope to be able to take my family there to experience the unmatched scenery and recreation that Johnson Valley has to offer. Across the county, OHV

recreation supports small towns, to big cities and everything in between. The recent King of the Hammers race, held every February for the last 5 years, has attracted more than 20,000 spectators from across the globe to congregate in the Johnson Valley OHV area for a week of the most grueling off-road racing in the world. This year, there were active duty military personnel participating in the race, as well as a United State Marine Corps Color Guard present for the presentation of our nation's colors. Under the proposed plan, the expansion to 29 Palms would takeover approximately 90% of the King of the Hammers race course, and more importantly forever remove it from public access. My uncle and brother are military veterans, and I will support our troops until the end of time. There are numerous other areas across the country that can provide adequate training scenarios for the military to match any environment found anywhere else in the world. This action, if allowed to go forward, will do nothing but evict thousands of recreationalists from PUBLIC land. Public land, as I'm sure you are aware, is becoming more and more scarce. Keep Public Lands Open to the Public. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received**

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 736

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley needs to remain as on OHV area. Parks like these provide lots of opportunities for the economy in these areas. They provide jobs at the gas stations, fabrication shops, motels, restaurants and it keeps a lot of young kids out of trouble by allowing them a place to hang and to be able to express themselves with through their vehicles.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 737

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open, OHV users are losing areas every year!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 738

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Areas like the Hammer in Johnson Valley are becoming one of the last off-road venues the 4x4 communities have. We are being assault from all direction and the sport of rock crawler can't afford another blow. Monster, over built, home brew, buggy's are the type of stuff that makes America unique. We support are troops and the defense of America should always come first, but if there is away to save Johnson valley then I hope it can be done.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 739

**Last Name** Frichter

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** I have made 2 trips to the Johnson Valley OHV in the past years and hope to make many more in the future. This area has become a hub for Off Road activities it also hosts a number of events each year held by clubs and organizations. It would be a huge loss to the offroading community if use of this land was no longer available. Please don't take away one of our major parks that so many of us have grown to love!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 740

**Last Name** leever

**First Name** chris

**Comment** I have gone all the way down to Johnson Valley from my home in Montana a few time now. I love it so much i am trying to find work down there so i can move there. The King of the Hammers race has done so much for our sport and closing Johnson Valley would have a rippling and devastating effect on our sport. Not to mention the the public's view of the system and how it goes about doing these things. sincerely. Chris Leever

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 741

**Last Name** Luning

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** Dear Marine Corp, I am not even close to the land in question, but it is still a very important part of land to me and othe east coast wheelers that plan to cross the country to enjoy this particular OHV area. There are not many areas left in the US, and I am sure there are A LOT of marines that also enjoy days full of wheeling and hanging with your buddies. Its an event that brings people together, and with most of the larger OHV areas on the east coast closed, parts of Moab closing, we arelosing place to get together and share what we all love to do. I am sure there are other alternatives to building on that land, please take the time to reconsider and see what closing this would do to the offroad world. Ryan

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 742

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The following are comments for Alternative #3: [reasons to expand to the East]? No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley? More compatible areas with the proposed action? Less impact to local business owners? Less impact to recreational opportunities? Less populated? Has been used in the past by the military? Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West? Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities? Reduction in area for the film industry? Negative impact on the economy? May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities? May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities? May promote illegal riding? Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality? Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 743

**Last Name** Lawrence

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** This area is public land that generates lots of \$\$\$ to local and national businesses. The King of Hammers race held annually here is one of the biggest off-road races.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 744

**Last Name** Wilken

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** I am a fabricator from the midwest and shutting down Johnson valley would make a huge impact on my life. 1/3 of the work i do is for the King Of The Hammers race alone! It is one the best places to go wheeling in our country. My children are looking forward to enjoying this place. I really hope this land stays open to the public so that future generations can enjoy this place as much I have. Taking this land away from us would be the same as taking away our way of life!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 745

**Last Name** Schram

**First Name** P. T.

**Comment** Please retain the Johnson Valley area as a mixed use recreational area. I do not think it is excessive to ask that American citizens be allowed to use public lands for mixed use recreation while that same public land is not being used for military purposes. Given the state of the US economy, it is even more important for local vendors/business people the opportunity to sell fuel, food, and other necessities to those wishing to use such public lands. When I travel long distances to take advantage of such public lands, I make it a point to make as many of my purchases as possible from local vendors in a way to further thank them for the services they provide and those that the local topography offers. P. T. Schram

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 746

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

To whom it may concern, I am greatly concerned about the issue of Johnson Valley OHV area being acquired by the United States Marine Corps to expand their training area of 29Palms. As both an avid offroader and a retired Marine, I have an interest in both parties reasoning about the land aquisition. While I fully support the training of our Marines and would expect that every opportunity being made available to them to increase the positive effect of their training, I do not feel that Johnson Valley OHV should be allowed to be made part of the 29Palms Base, nor do I see a need for the Marines to conduct training at this location. There are better locations for the Marines to use and the loss of Johnson Valley OHV to the recreational offroading community will cause local businesses in Victorville and Yucca Valley to lose money. I truly hope that all opinions and options are weighed and considered prior to the decision being made. Thank you for your time. Sincerly, Jon Simpson GySgt, USMC (Ret)

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 747

**Last Name** Bennett

**First Name** Jennifer

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an area I have been riding, climbing and hiking since a child and to lose this area or have limited access will be a very sad day. As I hope in the near future to teach my grand children the beauty of Johnson Valley, the terrain of the geological landscape and the versatility of the riding areas. It is unfortunate that "WE" as US citizens that love to ride in the desert and mountains continue to lose land. The majority of the riders that are responding to keep Johnson Valley open are those that also GIVE back to Johnson Valley. Our club continues to have CLEAN UP weekends where we all help Johnson Valley keep her beauty and pick up the trash that others forgot to take away. We also continue to have our Trials events at the Cougar Buttes location. A tradition since the 1940's. This is not something we take very lightly as everyone has a piece of history with Johnson Valley. Please consider that as decisions are being made.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 748

**Last Name** Leon

**First Name** Bridget

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area has been shared with our family for many years now. We have built and enjoyed rock crawling as a family and are sad to hear that there is a threat of it being taken away from us, especially that

there is NO other place like it. I can't imagine where else we would have to go to enjoy this kind of terrain. Our children have grown to enjoy and respect these areas as well. I can think of NO other way to teach children how precious this land is that we live on. As much as we have contributed to these parts of the deserts well being, it would be a real shame to have it taken away from us. Please consider our requests to keep Johnson Valley open for it is a way of life for a lot of people. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 749

**Last Name** Sobrero

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** I believe that Johnson Valley OHV is a very valuable asset to the economy of the surrounding towns and cities in the area. It is also of great value to the offroad community as well. Please do not let something this valuable to so many people get shut down or reduced in size. The amount of areas for people in the offroad community to recreate has been rapidly dwindling over the years and we cannot afford to lose more. Thanks for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the

importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 750

**Last Name** crosbty

**First Name** alexander

**Comment** i believe that johnson valley needs to remain an OHV area so that familys for generations to come can enjoy and grow closer wheeling and enjoying the great outdoors. It also boosts the local economy with local events such as King of the Hammers. Please keep Johnson Valley open to OHV enthusiasts

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 751

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Sheldon

**Comment** Please don't take away anymore of our land. This is a great place to take my kid's. in the past 3 years we have been down to Johnson Valley five time's. with all that has been taken away from us in the past year's please just leave our land alone. this area is quick to access and a great place for families to gather. once a year my old high school friends and i get together here and we are able to let all of our kid's have fun. it's much better then letting them run the street's. I know this is short and sweet but it's all i have time for right now or i could go on and on. Thank you for your time Sheldon F. Miller

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 752

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** With the already limmited open space that allows leagle off road recreation it would only add to the illeagle side of the sport. All to often do I read articles about illeagle dumping, trespassing, and destructive activities ocurinng and being blamed on the offraod comunity. Takeing away open space areas would only add to this problem. We are being taxed and have money being eartaged exclusively for OHV use. But that money is being grabbed by local and state government for uses other than what it was origionaly intended. This is a growing problem and again takeing away more land would only add to it. As I try to raise my children and teach them about outdoor recreation in a responcable way it only makes it even harder when there no place to go. Please consider these oppinions before takeing any more of MY land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 753

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, While I am a patriotic American and strongly support our armed services I strongly oppose the 29Palms Training Land Acquisition in the land area known as "The Hammers". Enjoying the outdoors is something that is important to me and my family. One of the ways that we do this is through family jeep expeditions. We have done this throughout the country ranging from our home state of Massachusetts to as far west as Utah. One of these days I hope to visit these trails in the area known as The Hammers. This is something I hope for my son to be able to do with his future children as well. Public lands are a precious resource that is becoming more scarce on what seems a daily basis. While I do support the Marine Corps and their need for training areas I do not support the expansion of 29Palms.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 754

**Last Name** Feichter

**First Name** Tony

**Comment** I ask you to please reconsider your use of this proposed area. Off roading is a very family orientated sport that has recently been under extreme pressure from groups that are not familiar with the sport. There are fewer and fewer places for families to enjoy these activities. It is almost impossible to open up a new park due to the restrictions that are in place. It is imperative that the places that our currently operating as off-road playgrounds stay open for all to enjoy. Best Regards, Tony

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 755

**Last Name** COLE

**First Name** CHRIS

**Comment** I would like to express an interest in keeping the Johnson Valley OHV area located next to 29 Palms open for public use. I understand there are times when the Marine Corp may need expanded training area and there should be a compromise. Not to mention with the President's proposed budget cuts for the military that may cause a cease in future training missions. There has to be a way to keep the trails open for the public's usage.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 756

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to vote for alternative #3 in regards to the Johnson Valley proposal.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 757

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** Good Morning, I am writing to voice my support for an open recreational area at Johnson Valley OHV that is open to the public on a year round basis. We, the people, are finding more and more of our recreational areas closed off, many times in the name of land protection, while at the same time government entities are acquiring lands to be used for their purposes, which end up being far more destructive than anything we could (or would) do. Furthermore, closing off another very popular OHV area will only lead to an increase in "illegal" off road activity by people that are just trying to find some place to go. I ask that you would consider the far reaching effects this decision will have on the public and economy as a whole. And the minimal benefit and use that will be provided to those that want to acquire it. Thank you, Sincerely. Thomas A. Miller

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding (refer to Section 4.2). The proposed action includes implementation of several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) designed to reduce these potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level.

**Comment ID** 758

**Last Name** Sorrentino

**First Name** Nicole

**Comment** Please do not close Johnson Valley to OHV! This is my favorite place to come out to.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 759

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Im writing this to help protect Johnson Valley and keep it open for offroad / recreational use. Former Military I understand the Importance of training and land to do so. I just ask that other land is used and keep this land open to the public since we do not have much as it is. I also get that you take heat from other organizations to go here dont go there blablabla but there must be another option. As always thanks for what yo do! I am proud to be an American. Lastly thanks for listneing.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This

information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 760

**Last Name** Myles

**First Name** Justin

**Comment** I was blessed with the chance to travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area for the KOH 2010 and compete as part of a team. The landscape was beautiful and an offroaders dream. It is a long way from home, but I know that a group of people from Canada(myself included), are planning to make this trek in the near future just to experience the driving there first hand. Thank you for considering my comments in this matter.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 761

**Last Name** Dozier

**First Name** Jeffrey

**Comment** Please do not take the OHV access away from the public in Johnson Valley. The area provides world class recreation and is important to the people. This type of recreational terrain is a National Treasure and should be treated as such.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 762

**Last Name** Lehr

**First Name** Alyssa

**Comment** I ask you as the daughter of a Veteran, PLEASE reconsider your location for the base addition! Johnson Valley is critical to the OHV community. We are those who most support the troops! Ask your own! I cant tell you how many Marine families I have had the pleasure of spending a weekend with in Johnson Valley. The OHV community is loosing precious land by the thousands of acres. This land supports many professional racing teams(several are military!), industries for research and development, it supports local stores, restaurants, repair businesses and it even supports my business in Northern California. Our children are loosing the potential for healthy active recreation. The families that use that land are extremely supportive of the military. There are many other locations that you could consider for the base to expand and I sincerely hope that you do. Please choose another location and leave one of the last OHV areas in California out of your expansion plans. I cannot express how important this property is to our off-road community. PLEASE RECONSIDER! Thank you for listening to our little voices.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps

understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 763

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am an avid offroader and would like to see the Johnson Valley ofroad area left open for public use. Today, many US forest service lands are being restricted to vehicle traffic cutting off legal areas for us to enjoy the outdoors and spend time with family and friends. I want to encourage you to make provisions for continued use of this area for all american's.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 764

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** me and my 2 sons enjoy vacationing in the johnson valley area. my 5 year old is always saying "dad, remember that one time in johnson valley" always with a different ending to the story. we are really gonna miss vacationing there.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 765

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I prefer Alternative 3 - to keep Johnson Valley open to public recreation as it is now and has been for years.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 766

**Last Name** Orton

**First Name** Edward

**Comment** To whom this may concern I would like to state how much expanding the base in any direction to the west would impact my family. This area is not just a hobby for my family as well as many others this is a life style as well as a lively hood. We are now on our third generation in our life style and small off road shop that bases a large part of which on the Means Dry lake area. Taking this will remove a key component to my family as well as the future for my kids to carry on what my father started over 40 yrs ago. We are limited to where we can go and use open land the base on the other hand is free to expand in several other directions to the East or in other locations all together. Please consider this is not about a week end get away place but a life style my family has become dependent on.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 767

**Last Name** stoner

**First Name** nathean

**Comment** This area is very important to OHV activities.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 768

**Last Name** Materna

**First Name** thomas

**Comment** Please addopte recommendation #3 the saves off road recreation for our kids to enjoy year round when they can get out to use it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 769

**Last Name** Midkiff

**First Name** Christopher

**Comment** My family and I will greatly be affected by the expansion at the Hammers!! We travel 200 miles each way every other weekend to get away of the regular hustle and bustle of life! We spend approximately \$25,000 yearly just on travel expenses in the Victorville/lucerne area! On top of that I have spent a lot of money building toys just for that area! My question to you is this. Why can't the expansion go to the east? Why take more land away from me, my family, my friends, and millions of other offroad enthusiasts? Have you thought about the effect you will have on all the families that live near the hammers that live off the money they make from the offroad enthusiast? Please reconsider your expansion!!!!!! Thank you for your time, Christopher Midkiff My

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 770

**Last Name** griffin

**First Name** robert

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley alone. I do not support the proposed expansion of The Marine base or operations in this area. Sincerely, Robert J. Griffin

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 771

**Last Name** Goodell

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I hope there is a way to keep Johnson Valley open for public recreation. I also hope in doing this that there is still a way for the brave men and women of the USMC to be able to train and protect our way of life. Thank you and God Bless, Paul

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 772

**Last Name** Wells

**First Name** Kyle

**Comment** I live in Utah and have not yet visited Johnson Valley ohv area, I have been watching videos, and looking at pics as well as listening to stories from the area and can not wait to visit in the near future, I have been building a car specific for this area and it would kill me and alot of other people i know

and love if this area was taken away from public use. Please consider elsewhere, or work someway that we may have johnson valley to enjoy for public use for years and years to come. Thank you for your time, and the opportunity to comment on this subject, Thanksyou Kyle wells.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 773

**Last Name** Watson

**First Name** Brandon

**Comment** To whom it may concern Please re consider your proposed expansion of the 29 Palms base to the west into the Johnson Valley area. This is an area that is very important to off highway vehicle users. As you are well aware the King of the Hammers race is held in this area in February every year. This event draws a lot of attention to the area for a few weeks but what is not seen is how much the area is used outside of that event. I myself travel from Western Colorado to Johnson Valley several times a year, including King of the Hammers, for recreational events. I have always seen someone out on the Means dry lake bed when I am there. It doesn't matter if it's a weekday or a weekend people that are into off highway sports are out there. I understand that in this day and age the need for Military training in an environment similar to the areas we are currently fighting in is important. This training is what allows the men and women of our armed forces to keep those of us that are not soldiers to have the freedom and ability to do

the activities we dearly love. I do not take this freedom lightly and I thank all of our armed forces members for their service. Part of the freedom we have as Americans is the ability to travel to destinations such as Johnson Valley for a race, family weekend, vehicle testing, hiking etc. If the 29 Palms base is expanded into this area I feel the very hand that protects us is then taking away our freedoms. Please look elsewhere for this base expansion. Thank you for your time Brandon Watson

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 774

**Last Name** julie

**First Name** beggs

**Comment** I do not feel that the Marine Corps should "aquire" any more land or property for training....Please do not...!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 775

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley provides some of the finest off road trails in the USA if not the world. It would truly be a loss to all us who enjoy the challenge of a difficult trail for the area to be closed to public use. Please do whatever is necessary to continue public access in Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 776

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing to express my fondness of the Johnson Valley OHV area also known as Hammers. I have been making the 20 hour drive from Oregon to Hammers at least twice a year for the past 5 years. I have created and shared some great memories with both friends and family there and it would be a terrible hit to the offroad community if Johnson Valley was ever shut down or divided up. Please take into consideration the friends and families that have come to love this place

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 777

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keeping areas open like Johnson Valley is important to the entire offroading community including myself. I feel as though there are several viable alternatives to this area and would rather the Marines research those. I do not want to appear as though I disagree with or do not support the Marines and what they mean to our country but I live near a large base in NW FL. I see hundreds of acres not being used and the land is in an area that could be used for the public's interest. I have never visited Johnson Valley but would would someday like to be able to visit as large open areas for public use is dying in this country and would like to see a place as special as Johnson Valley stay open for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 778

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to state for the record that as an American and a Vet our family have enjoyed going out to Johnson Valley. We have been going for 20 yrs. my children and grand children have grown up out there. It would be a great

loss for our family if it were closed down.If I get a vote I VOTE NO for closure. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 779

**Last Name** gotte

**First Name** winston

**Comment** what about access to the cal 200 memorial site? what about access to all the mines? which is part of early ca. history. what about the 90 tortoise that died during the solar project relocation? i went to the ontario meeting and got no answers. what 10 months will be available for recreation?

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.2 and 4.2 have been revised to acknowledge the California 200 Memorial site and impacts to access of the site. Access to mining and other land holding will be determined on a case-by-case basis once an action alternative is selected (see Section 2.6 of the EIS for more information). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The proposed two months of usage have not been determined at this time; however it is expected that training would occur in the spring and fall. Exact timeframes will be determined and communicated to the public if Alternative 4, 5, or 6 is selected. Please see Section 2.5.4. for a discussion of the proposed communication and notification procedures in regards to public access to the RPAA. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 780

**Last Name** Grell

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** Please keep this area open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 781

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to

adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us. Thank you for your consideration. Robert Little Los Angeles, CA 90045

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 782

**Last Name** Wells

**First Name** Trish

**Comment** I am relatively new to rock crawling, but the few times I have been I have become a major fan. This is not just a hobby, but a lifestyle and huge part of everyone involved's life. I see everyone taking in the environment, the views and enjoy the stories that are told about the trails. I was amazed at how much everyone cares about the areas we have to play in, and how far everyone goes to make sure the areas stay safe and clean. We cannot afford to lose such a major and beautiful area such as Johnson Valley, it would be devastating to both families and businesss alike if this was to happen

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 783

**Last Name** Pace

**First Name** Harley

**Comment** I believe that the land acquisition for the 29 Palms training facility should be the basic Alternative 3 with modified borders on the south to include some of the Sheephole Valley Wilderness area and the Cadiz Dunes Wilderness area. Expansion to the east would effect far fewer people than the Preferred Alternative 6 that you are proposing now. Why do we not use some of these Wilderness areas ? I can see 12 wilderness areas just in the map shown on your web site while I can see only 1 unrestricted OHV area. Alternative 3 does have the problem of 1 road running through it but since you only need this land for 2 months out of the year you could close the road for those 2 months, just as you have proposed closing the entire OHV area for those same 2 months with the Preferred Alternative 6. You can also require people using that 1 road for the other 10 months to buy a permit for it's use, just as you have proposed for people using only 44% of the OHV area with the Preferred Alternative 6. You can also notify the permitted users of the road when it will be closed by the same method you plan on using to notify the OHV area users of when the OHV area will be closed with the Preferred Alternative 6. It seems far easier to police illegal access to the road when it is closed since there have to be very few access points to that road whereas policing access into the OHV area, with the Preferred Alternative 6, when it is closed would be close to imposible since there have to be hundreds of access points into that area from all sides. Costs for policing illegal access for the road with Alternative 3 would have to be far less than the same policing costs using the preferred Alternative 6. If the Preferred Alternative 6 land acquisition is implemented and the only legal unrestricted OHV area anywhere close is reduced by 66%, requires a permit to use, and is even closed for 2 months out of the year it will surly lead to a huge problem with illegal OHV use in all the surrounding communities. I do not believe that expansion to the east with the Alternative 3 plan would cause any of these problems. In all my years of

living here I have yet to see any OHV activity in the Alternative 3 areas. Being a long time resident of Landers I have seen 1st hand what kind of problems illegal OHV use will cause if there is not a legal and unrestricted place for all of the OHV's to use, All the residents in the surrounding communities will be the ones to suffer the consequences. If the Preferred Alternative 6 land acquisition is implemented and the only legal unrestricted OHV area anywhere close is reduced by 66%, requires a permit to use, and is even closed for 2 months out of the year it will greatly reduce the number of races that can be held in this area each year which will be devastating to California's ORV dealers and accessory industries. I am sure there would be far less financial loss for California's businesses if Alternative 3 is implemented.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding (refer to Section 4.2). The proposed action includes implementation of several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) designed to reduce these potentially significant impacts to a less than significant level. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 784

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a 20 year Marine AND avid off road enthusiast, I am opposed to the MCAGCC 29 Palms expansion extending into Johnson Valley ORV Park. While fully understanding the increase in land requirements both for training and impact areas to support a MEB sized element, I also know that our off road lands are shrinking at the cyclic rate. The Hammers trails at Johnson Valley are one are in the country that is both helping to provide growth of responsible use AND large scale growth in both the sport and related industries. During the trying economic times we are currently in, something providing strength and growth to an industry is somethin that can not be overlooked. The King of the Hammers event alone brings people in from all over the world. PLEASE reconsider other expansion options. Thank you and Semper Fi.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 785

**Last Name** Hartmetz

**First Name** Karl

**Comment** I believe there should be some give and take in this proposed expansion on the 29 Palms Combat Traing Center. IF , I repeat IF, it is necessary to expand the training ranges, then the BLM (U S Government) shold allow the OHV area to "expand" an equal amount to allow for the continued recreational use at the current level. A I mean after all, "THEY" can decide to remove land form "public access" then "THEY" can certainly RESTORE" land to public access. I do not think this is to much to ask. Thanks for your time. Karl

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The Draft EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 786

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a California native as are my parents before me. I have seen this state go from a thriving economic force to be reckoned with to a Government run Beauraucratic nightmare place to live. We haave run a business here for 22 years. In our off time we take full advantage of the off-road recreatioanal areas with our Jeep and dirt bikes. Please consider a different area for your base. We have few places left we can ride and jeep. In reading the course of action you all are taking, you have no answers to simple questions, such as if the area will be open 10 months of the year, which 10 months, and so on. How can you take the time and money you have spent on the campaign for this closure, we the tax payers have paid for, and not have more answers? Take my vote as a NO for this closure.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with

the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Exact timeframes will be determined and communicated to the public if Alternative 4, 5, or 6 is selected. Please see Section 2.5.4. for a discussion of the proposed communication and notification procedures in regards to public access to the RPAA. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 787

**Last Name** Savinski

**First Name** Cody

**Comment** In February 2011 I spent a week out in the Johnson Valley OHV area. Myself and 6 other people rented an RV, 4wheelers and UTVs to use in the area for the week, and to get around race day for the King of the Hammers event. I was amazed at how many people were brought to the area for the event. It was fun exploring the different terrain than Im used to in Northeast. We had so much fun that we are planning on making it a yearly event. It would be sad to see Johnson Valley closed since we look forward to coming back.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 788

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am strongly opposing any land closures of public land. This specific area is not a good option for many reasons as listed in your EIS report. I am a property owner in this area and do not want this area destroyed by the marines. This area is beeming with life and beauty and natural resources. I am well aware of the need to train marines for combat. I feel that this whole thing is another large land grab by the federal government and is happening

all over the USA. I would like to recommend that the commander use his head and come up with a better plan. We all have to live together in this great nation. I really do not believe the smoke and mirrors anymore. You are not above the law of the land. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 789

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an avid off roader and a fan of the King of the Hammers (KOH) event held annually in the Johnson Valley area, I ask that you reconsider expanding the 29 Palms base to include the all of the major off road trails available. The Johnson Valley Hammer trails are considered by many to be the best available in North America, if not the world, for rock crawling and rock racing. This can be seen through the success of the KOH race, and the massive amount of tourism dollars it brought into the area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 790

**Last Name** trafton

**First Name** baylen

**Comment** I have gone to johnson valley and the hammers growing up and some of my fondest memories are on thoes grounds.... My relatives i once traveled their with have now passed and i began to build my own vehicle to enjoy the lands. I have been building for a couple years now and will soon have it complete... I only hope when the time comes for me to take my younger nephews and nieces the land is still open. including someday my own kids

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 791

**Last Name** Mason

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** To whom it concerns All though I do not reside in CA. Johnson Valley OHV area has been a very important destination for myself, my family and friends. Please with all due diligence keep this area open for the people to enjoy. Thank You mark Mason

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 792

**Last Name** Parker

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I understand the need for training our soldiers, but I feel that there is land elsewhere that can be better served by our military. The public land that we can use for OHV is shrinking fast. The area in and around Means dry lake is one of the best suited for OHV. It is unique in what it has to offer the public. Please allow the public full access to this land. I would be very distraught if my son would not be able to enjoy this area as I have. Thanks  
Scott Parker

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 793

**Last Name** Bakker

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** As a responsible OHV user, I urge the Marine Corp to expand the 29 palms training area in another direction, not into Johnson Valley. I understand the need for training areas, but I also understand the need for our dwindling public lands to stay available to the public. This area is one the few places in the Mojave that I am familiar with, been going there since I was a child. I want the chance to show my own children the beauty of the desert, the same one that I was introduced to in 1970. Thank you for your attention.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 794

**Last Name** FIELD

**First Name** DAVID

**Comment** Find different land. It's a big country, there is no reason you should be taking away one of our OHV area's when you have plenty of other area's to choose from. We need this for our recreation area. I know this may not be as eloquent as some of the responses you have received, but it is indeed a valid point. Don't take this land from us, the people, who use it. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

795

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Hi Folks, I understand the motivation and desire to have land available for the Marines to train on. I'm a retired US Navy Chief. An FCC(SW) Tomahawk tech, who worked in training other military member for 11+ years, so I understand training. I worked with the Marines from time to time. I do so, on the ground, in the air, and at sea. Like thousands of other folks have mentioned and strongly suggested, taking any OHV land (specifically, Johnson Valley OHV) away from us, should not even be a consideration. There's plenty of adjacent lands available that should be used. I travel to Johnson Valley on a regular basis to enjoy its unique offroad areas, camping, scenic views, and peace it offers that is not replicated anywhere in the USA. Its unique offroad trail system that we have become intimately familiar with, should not be disturbed at all. Doing so would be a complete shame. I also strongly support the surrounding communities when I buy supplies and fuel. On average, I spend several hundred dollars each time I visit, on groceries etc. I do this about 6-10 times a year. Tampering with their well being would be bad for the local economy as well. Do the right thing, consider lands elsewhere, not take ours away like what our forefathers did with the Indians. Joe

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 796

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am extremely disappointed in the Marines perusing the aquisition of Johnson Valley. When such a large group of avid American citizens is opposed to losing access to our public lands the Military of all people and organizations should support our freedom to access and enjoy all parts of our country. Johnson Valley is a Mecca for all 4x4 enthuses across the country.I would be deeply sorry to see this icon of our industry lost as I have not had a chance to experience it yet. KEEP PUBLIC LANDS OPEN TO THE PUBLIC. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 797

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The area in Johnson Valley known as The Hammers is an incredibly popular destination for OHV enthusiasts. There is no substitute for this place in the context of OHV use. I believe there is a substitute for military use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 798

**Last Name** Pellegrino

**First Name** Deborah

**Comment** I want Option #3 which leaves 100% of Johnson Valley open & available to the public for Off-Highway Vehicle and recreational use 12 months out of the year! Why is the local & federal government spending additional monies to expand ammunition test areas in Johnson Valley, when our state is in a SERIOUS FINANCIAL BUDGET SHORTFALL and cutting jobs & badly needed services to it's citizens!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. Public input becomes part of the Final EIS and will be considered by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Consideration of national budget and other similar issues is outside the scope of a NEPA analysis. The EIS findings are one of many types of information that decision-makers will consider. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 799

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern: My name is Daniel. I am a legal, tax paying, voting citizen that enjoys responsible low speed OHV recreation. I also support our troops and military. I understand that our Marines need areas to train and perfect their skills. I just wish the Marines would look east for land or somewhere else instead of Johnson Valley, aka "The Hammers." A majority of OHV trails and land have already been closed in California as well as many western states. People need a place to recreate and The Hammers is a perfect place for this, away from cities and in the middle of nowhere. Closing this down to OHV activity would not be an wise economical decision on California's part. Also, let's think about all of our men and women in the military that like to recreate with their OHV's. Are "you" going to stand there and say, "Welcome home, thanks for putting your life on the line, and oh ya by the way you can't recreate at The Hammers anymore. Have a nice day." Really?, how does that seem fair? Thank you for your time and please do not take Johnson Valley away from the OHV community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public

scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	800
<b>Last Name</b>	Davis
<b>First Name</b>	Dion
<b>Comment</b>	Hello. I would like to state that I am very much against the Marine takeover of the Johnson Valley area. While I understand the needs of the Armed Forces, there are more appropriate options. I am a devoted user of the JV area. Johnson Valley has a long history of recreational use and is getting more popular every year. It has features and terrain that make it uniquely valuable. There are huge areas in the Mohave desert that are NOT uniquely valuable for recreation, and are much more appropriate for Marine use. Much of it has been incorrectly designated as Wilderness, but that should not remove it from consideration for Armed Forces use. Thank you.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed

MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	801
<b>Last Name</b>	Philblad
<b>First Name</b>	David
<b>Comment</b>	Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Hammers trail system. KEEP JOHNSON VALLEY OPEN FOR OHV USE. The marines can train with the navy at China Lake CA. Johnson Valley cannot be replaced as the perfect place for OHV events. Johnson Valley is very important to the community for economic and legal recreation purposes and should be left as is. If this area is closed to OHV use where are the thousands of OHVs going to be used legally? Johnson Valley must be kept open for OHV use. Thank you David Philblad 1552 Gaber Ct. North Las Vegas NV 89032
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	802
<b>Last Name</b>	Davis
<b>First Name</b>	Dion
<b>Comment</b>	Hello. I would like to state that I am very much against the Marine takeover of the Johnson Valley area. While I understand the needs of the Armed Forces, there are more appropriate options. I am a devoted user of the JV area. Johnson Valley has a long history of recreational use and is getting more popular every year. It has features and terrain that make it uniquely valuable. There are huge areas in the Mohave desert that are NOT uniquely valuable for recreation, and are much more appropriate for Marine use. Much of it has been incorrectly designated as Wilderness, but that should not remove it from consideration for Armed Forces use. Thank you. P.S: I would support Alternative Plan #3 or #7.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 803

**Last Name** Kelly

**First Name** Donald

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley ORV Park open. We want to be able to responsibly continue to visit this great park and enjoy the beautiful views and continue to have places available to enjoy time with my family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 804

**Last Name** Douglas

**First Name** Russ

**Comment** It seem to me that the Military would have limitless options as to a location for training. The public who pays for this public land is slowly being excluded from any use what ever of their land. I would suggest the military go further east in the area used by Patton that is now classified as "wilderness." Leave Johnson Valley open to off roaders!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

**Comment ID** 805

**Last Name** Norwood

**First Name** Zack

**Comment** I am not going to rehash what I am sure so many other offroaders and campers have commented on, but just to say I know that the United States armed forces needs all the suport we can give them. I just hope that we can come together and make a plan the works for all parties involved. Thank you Zack Norwood

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 806

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Im from the North coast of Canada, people like myself have not had the privilage to see and experience the beautiful area around Johnson Valley California, I hope to, one day. If this OHV area is closed, our sport will suffer a great loss which will be hard to recover from as we lose more and more acsess to land across the US and Canada. I hope a fair alternative can be achieved that will make everyone happy. Thanks for reading. Josh.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 807

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley lands open to OHV use. My oldest son Riley is 11 years old and loves to go off road. He has transversie myeletis which attacked his spinal cord at the age of one. He has to wear full leg braces a forearm crutch just to walk on level ground. He can't walk up but a few steps and must use a wheel chair for longer distances. If it werent for OHV use he would never have the opportunity to visit the wonders of the USA. Please keep the Jonson Valley lands open for OHV use so those who can't will be able.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 808

**Last Name** Benson

**First Name** Randall

**Comment** I was a member of Victor Valley 4 wheelers before the vast majority even knew of Johnson valley and the Hammer trails. I helped build a few of the

trials that we all love 15 years ago. These trails represent AMERICA and all it can do, and belong to AMERICANS everywhere. I resent this land power grab and a government that suggests it has the right to do with this property as it please`s. Stop the government land grab!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 809

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please work to keep Johnson Valley open as an OHV area. Next to Moab and the Rubicon, Johnson Valley is a major destination in the southwest for 4 wheelers. Myself and friends make the trip from Phoenix at least once every year to enjoy the trails of the Johnson Valley OHV area. It would be a major blow to see it closed.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 810

**Last Name** Foreman

**First Name** Jacob

**Comment** As an avid OHV enthusiast I ask that the Marines consider option 3 for the 29 Palms marine base expansion. I know it will cost more money but the economic impact of closing any part of Johnson Valley will be devastating to the local communities. I do not live near Johnson valley and I've never even been there but I hope to one day. Thanks for taking the time to read this.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 811

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close down our beloved johnson valley. my family and i have been going out to johnson valley for as long as i remember and i would like for my kids and grand kids to enjoy just the same as i have as a young kid. please look elsewhere for what hte military has to do.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 812

**Last Name** Chaapel

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I urge you do what you can to keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public for recreational use. The sport of 4X4 wheeling has a large following but the public properties open for such sport are dwindling. This is a beautiful area and it's closing would mean future generations would never be able to enjoy it. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 813

**Last Name** Withers

**First Name** Joel

**Comment** I have traveled to Johnson Valley OHV area from Mississippi for the past three years. It is a 3600 mile round trip for me. I really enjoy the time I have spent there and will be back again as long as it is open to the public. I am actually already planning my trip for 2011. I hope to be able to share the beauty of Johnson Valley with my daughter and son in the future.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 814

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have dreams of going to the Johnson Vally Trail system and to the King of the Hammers event there. Please don't shut it down. Please let my dream be realized

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 815

**Last Name** ingersoll

**First Name** scott

**Comment** i love this place me and friends go atlaest once a year. it takes 18 hours to get there but it is worth it. there is no other place like it for our sport.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 816

**Last Name** Fowler

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley for years with my friends. The trails there are like no other. I am looking forward to the day that I can take my son on those same trails that I have had so much fun on. It would be a shame if I can only show him pictures of where we used to be able to go. Please consider other options rather than closing Johnson Valley OHV area. Thank you for time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 817

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley needs to stay an OHV area. It is a childhood camping area and I wish to take my children there as well. It is also one of the last good motorcycle areas. Please use Ft. Irwin training grounds instead of usurping public BLM land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and

maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would interfere with the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	818
<b>Last Name</b>	Espino
<b>First Name</b>	William
<b>Comment</b>	I ask that you would take into consideration the amount of people who utilize the Johnson Valley OHV area. This area is a premiere OHV destination and is in a great location. Thousands of people travel to this area for the soul purpose of meeting new people and enjoying the land that our great nation has allowed us to use. Please do not take this land from those of us who visit it many times a year or those of us who dream one day of visiting the area. Many people have seen pictures, videos, and media coverage of trips to Johnson Valley for club runs or events like the King of the Hammers and have dreamed of running the same trails they have seen. Please do not take these peoples dreams away from them.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 819

**Last Name** Moncini

**First Name** Mickey

**Comment** I am a retired 64 year male. I served in the USN for 4 years on a destroyer that made tours to Viet Nam. Therefore, I do understand, the need for training for our armed forces to go into battle situations. I have been offroading for many years. Over the years the offroad community continues to lose more and more of our public land to recreate on. I would like to see Alternative #3 implemented. That way I could continue joining my dear friends in an area that we have enjoyed offroading in and would like to continue. I have over the years met and made great friendships by virtue of common love of the outdoors and 4wheeling. Some of these friends, I only see when we are out in Johnson Valley. It would be a shame if this were to be taken away from us, especially when there are other options available.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 820

**Last Name** Katz

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** PLEASE look for alternative ways to train while keeping the OHV area's open for us to use. I have been using the dezert with my family for 34 years, Im about to have my 1st kid and would REALLY like to show him what we have enjoyed all of our lifes. PLEASE dont take our land away

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted

public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 821

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I enjoy watching these guys design, build and drive these incredible machines!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 822

**Last Name** Croft

**First Name** Peter

**Comment** I support Alternative #3: This option leaves Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. This particular 'wilderness area' was used by General Patton to train military before it was designated as wilderness. The other Alternative de-designates OHV areas that are being used by Americans for recreation, living, income and more. The following are comments for Alternative #3: [reasons to expand to the East] No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley More compatible areas with the proposed action Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated Has been used in the past by the military Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West

Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities  
Reduction in area for the film industry Negative impact on the economy  
May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities May  
affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities  
and/or distribution facilities May promote illegal riding Potential impact  
on groundwater supplies and quality Potential impact on biological  
resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 823

**Last Name** Owens

**First Name** Travis

**Comment** Johnson Valley to means the world. After losing Tellico on the east coast, it would be another defistating blow to lose another great OHV area. Losing an area such as Johnson Valley is going to hurt the market, in that area, put a potential hurting on the cash flow in that area, and hurt business, and the overall fourwheeling community. People will start out sourcing to other areas for fourwheeling, maybe having to travel great distances to do so. If someone has to go through the trouble of this just to go enjoy themselves, wouldnt you feel bad? You should! Ive traveled thousands of miles from west TN to Johnson Valley just to say Ive been there, Its a compariable excitement as like getting a new toy. Its why were Americans, because we like to enjoy our freedom and expose ourself to memories and travel. Its how this country was founded, by exploring and wondering into the unknown. We've been doing it for hundreds of thousands of years. Now we're becoming a issue, Greed of use for something else or for whatever the secret, unknown, hidden issue the nay sayers are barking about, is. It's just darn right pathetic and to know the things this country is going through and someone else wants to limit, enthusist to yet another thing in life. The

Govt almost shutdown, NFL is in a lockout, were paying ridiculous prices for gasoline. After all the other issues our one get away, our cheapist get away compared to a week vacation. Is trying to be tripped from our grip. Like taking a toy bone from a dog, we'll never stop searching for it. You can bury it and we'll dig it up, my best advice as a young scholar, is let it happen and dont strip us of our passion. Im sure that making a extra buck or million of the restriction of us from Johnson Valley want kill you nor will, it be the end of the world. The land is useless otherwise the miles of dried up lake bed is a great designated spot for our sport. Thanks One of the OHV Saver's from TN

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 824

**Last Name** Watson

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** Writing to ask for you to reconsider any plans to take over Johnson Valley. My father has been taking me here since I was a little guy and now having my own little guy it would be a shame if he couldn't grow up and enjoy the great trails, and natural beauty of Johnson Valley. I would think there has to be many other options and would hope that the public has some say in this manner. Have a great day, Patrick Watson

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID**

825

**Last Name**

Sullivan

**First Name**

Kirsten

**Comment**

PLEASE look for alternative ways to train while keeping the OHV area's open for us to use. I have been using the dezert with my family for 34 years, I'm about to have my 1st kid and would REALLY like to show him what we have enjoyed all of our lifes. PLEASE dont take our land away

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 826

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please help keep Johnson Valley OHV Area open to the Public! Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS

public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 827

**Last Name** El Wardani

**First Name** Ramsey

**Comment** There has to be a better solution than taking a major portion of what little public land is still available for Off Highway Vehicles. It is a way of life for tens of thousands of families that use these areas on a regular basis - many of them with military backgrounds. Please find another place!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 828

**Last Name** Williams

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** Johnson Valley (the hammers) Is a great place for me and my family to go ride are dirt bike and also take my Jeep out on all the trails there. Please keep this space open to familys like mine. Thank you Richard Williams

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational

lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 829

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i vote for alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 830

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** YOU GUYS HAVE TO FIND SOMEWHERE ELSE TO BOMB... PLACES ARE RUNNING OUT TO GO WHEEL AND WHERE WE CAN

IT IS SURROUNDED BY PEOPLE THIS PLACE U CAN BE SEMI ALONE ITS A NICE GET AWAY AND AWESOME JEEP TRAILS THAT U COULD NEVER DUPLICATE

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 831

**Last Name** Swearingen

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** I support Alternative 3, allowing the present OHV area to remain intact. The recreational community and local businesses rely on the continued user traffic to this popular to support their businesses. The military has other options to the East that don't adversely effect recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a

formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

<b>Comment ID</b>	832
<b>Last Name</b>	leasher
<b>First Name</b>	shane
<b>Comment</b>	Our family visits Johnson Valley 5-10 times a year. We love this area for camping and offroading. You would be taking away a favorit place for many people.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.</p>

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 833

**Last Name** Taylor

**First Name** Rick

**Comment** Please keep this resource available for public use. as we are already too limited to open areas.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 834

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i love johnson valley, please dont take it away from us...

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted

public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 835

**Last Name** reynolds

**First Name** josh

**Comment** Keep Johnson valley open for public offroad use!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 836

**Last Name** Adams

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I vote for alternative 3

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 837

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We need to keep the JOhnson Valley open to OHV as per Alternative #3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 838

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and i are planning on venturing west in the near future(we reside in upstate N.Y.) for a multiple state offroading/camping trip. This is one of the locations we are planning to stop at.This would be a big disappointment

to see this place closed. We understand the necessity to train in that area and terrain because it replicates what the U.S. is involved with over seas. Maybe it would be possible to have a small guarded base off limit to the public and train in that surrounding area at a specified month/s and call it quits for a while and let us enjoy the country side. Most everyone in this hobby, sport appreciate what the armed forces do, so please come up with a sensible solution. If this were to close it will only lead to more negativity toward the government. The locals will feel like we do, having public land and not being able to use it (good ol' f-ing N.Y.). THANK YOU

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 839

**Last Name** Jondahl

**First Name** Winton

**Comment** Please include my response in your evaluation. the overall public I believe option 3 is best for the overall public

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 840

**Last Name** Ciccolini

**First Name** Luca

**Comment** Reason to expand to the East - Less impact to local business owners  
Reasons against expansion to the West - Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities. Reduction in area for the film industry

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 841

**Last Name** brown

**First Name** john

**Comment** I don't see or understand the need for military training that close to people when there is hunderds of thousands acres I new mexico that nobody use's my familys been going to johnson valley since the 70's as many others I feel there are plenty of war games going on in the middle east we should just keep them there.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 842

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the general public for off-road events.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 843  
**Last Name** Ehlers  
**First Name** Ken  
**Comment** My recommendation would be to go with option 3. This option would best serve everybody's interest.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 844

**Last Name** Fiore

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** My comments today are directed toward the Marines proposed use of the Johnson Valley OHV area. This area is very important to many Americans, as its terrain is unique and the driving and outdoor experience is sublime. Don't take away this treasured area by expanding West into its acreage (Alt. # 6). I see alternative #3 as a much better option for the continued enjoyment of the area by hundreds of thousands of Americans each year. The area to the East will make for less impact on the surrounding businesses as well. Also, this area was used by General Patton for military training. Please don't take away more of our OHV land, not only for the people that want to enjoy the land, but it is also the best alternative for the economy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 845

**Last Name** Andersen

**First Name** Erik

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Johnson Valley means the world to me. It is what got me into the sport of rock crawling and off road racing. I've been there three times and each time I go I discover some new cool place out there. I can't even begin to explain the memories I've made out there, or the people I've met. Some life long memories have definitely been made for me. I think you should keep the area open to all OHV users because going out there is an unforgettable experience. I would be devastated if going out there were no longer an option for me and my friends. I know there are many others in the OHV community who share my feelings. Please consider this before closing any areas. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 846

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing in support of leaving the Johnson Valley Recreational Area open to off-roading and the King of the Hammers race that has become the spotlight of the off-road industry. I think there is plenty of other land available for the military training area that is threatening to take over the Johnson Valley area. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 847

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I prefer option 3. My family has enjoyed the use of the Johnson Valley OHV area for many years. It would be a shame to lose this excellent wilderness area. There are so few OHV areas left especially ones with this great terrain and scenic views.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 848

**Last Name** Dorau

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I am an avid OHV enthusiast and vote for option #3 for the reasons below:  
- No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley - More compatible areas with the proposed action - Less impact to local business owners - Less impact to recreational opportunities - Less populated - The area has already been used by the military in the past - Economy will be less affected  
Reasons against expansion to the West - Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities - Reduction in area for the film industry - Negative impact on the economy - May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities - May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities - May promote illegal riding - Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality - Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon) Sincerely, Scott M. Dorau

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 849

**Last Name** Bland

**First Name** Coleen

**Comment** No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 850

**Last Name** odum

**First Name** jake

**Comment** Alternative #3 is the best action for everyone for a lot of reasons. Please consider all sides equally in the decision making process. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 851

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This is a HUGE place for our sport please move East to a spot that isn't nearly as crucial for our sport!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 852

**Last Name** Dunshee

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** I must say I have never been to the Johnson Valley area YET!!! I've had plans to for awhile, and now that my kids are getting a little older we plan to attend the King of the Hammers events held there. We also plan to head there to enjoy the challenging terrain with our 4x4. Public lands are constantly being taken from us, the "public". Then where do we take our families and enjoy the land? We do live in Colorado and in the 14 years we have lived there, more public land has been closed to the public. We moved to Colorado from Maryland where public land is almost now non existent. Please reconsider this land grab and consider the "PUBLIC". Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within

specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 853

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I hate to see our dwindling access to public lands. Many people enjoy the Hammers and with each area we lose, the same number of off road users are concentrated onto the remaining areas. Making it less enjoyable for all.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 854

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** After a careful perusal of the proposal, I fully support all aspects of the use of the land for military operations. This is the best and highest use of the land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 855

**Last Name** hails

**First Name** douglas

**Comment** Johnson valley orv area is one of only a few areas left for the public to enjoy the fun and peace of off-roading. It should remain open year round !

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 856

**Last Name** Wagner

**First Name** Will

**Comment** I have grown up in Southern California. I am now 48 years old. I have seen the offroad areas shrink to almost nothing. My wife of 24 years and children ranging from 14 to 18 all are offroad users. We try to mix up the areas we go to but it is getting harder and harder to go places any more due to the fact that all of the areas available to us are being closed, reduced or taken away. We are being treated like the American Indian. Forcing all of us into a smaller and smaller area. The public wonders why offroad accidents increase yearly. This is why. Why can't the USMC and the federal government use land that is not in use out in Death Valley or in the Nevada desert that nobody uses for family recreation? Why must they take from us the areas of recreation that are used by thousands of people a year that we pay for with our registration money? Why not use Texas? It is a huge state filled with thousands of acres of unused land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land

would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 857

**Last Name** Fisher

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I prefer alternative 3 because the Johnson Valley area is prime motorized recreation land and always has been. It is fairly close to the LA metropolitan area and it's millions of people desiring desert recreation. More and more land has become unavailable to recreational use and this does not serve the people.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 858

**Last Name** Hoke

**First Name** Todd

**Comment** The area to the East is less populated and already used by the Military in the Past. By moving West, this would have a detrimental effect on the economy, the film industry

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 859

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I fully oppose the any plans to expand USMC AGCC into any OHV areas of Johnson Valley. My family and I frequently use these areas and object to these opportunities being removed from our lives. Furthermore, I assert that the USMC AGCC CEQA analysis does not fully analyze the impacts of large combat maneuvers and their contribution to cultural, biological, recreation, and air quality. By adding huge amounts of PM10 USMCAGCC will cause the local air district to not be able to meet their attainment goals. Also, by decreasing the size of one of the few recreational areas left without proper mitigation is a violation if CEQA.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The proposed training exercises would increase emissions of GHGs, as presented in Section 5.4.8 of the EIS. However, the efforts by the Marine Corps and DoN to implement broad-based programs to reduce energy consumption and use renewable and alternative fuels would somewhat offset these emission increases.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 860

**Last Name** McNicholas

**First Name** Randy

**Comment** Option 3 is the only possible answer The Military already has more land than they could possibly use. Why endanger a natural resource when the military is already in areas of the world we should not be. How about we take care ourselves before we try to help areas of the the world that do not want us anyway or are unwilling to help themselves.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 861

**Last Name** miller

**First Name** wayne

**Comment** option # 3 is what should be agreed to

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 862

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Marine corp should use land that has already been used for the military purposes in the past instead of taking recreation area away from the public. There are very limited number of area that are legal for OHV use and the public who uses these areas pays OHV fees for the privilege to do so. Leave one of the few riding areas left to the OHV crowd or those people will be forced into other areas, increasing the impact to even fewer riding areas and increasing death and accidents that occur when to many people are in to small of an area. The land to the east is not currently under use and would be a better use of resources.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps also understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

<b>Comment ID</b>	863
<b>Last Name</b>	garrett
<b>First Name</b>	westley
<b>Comment</b>	I think that the millitary has take more then its fair share of our land that we work all week to go out and enjoy. Save our land for the people don't go and destroy it with tranning that they already have land for. Please save our desert for tax payers.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.
<b>Comment ID</b>	864
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Leave Johnson Valley open for public recreation and ORV use. We as off-roaders are finding less and less areas available for use. The Marines can open an area east of Johnson Valley for there use and training. It is less populated, has been used for military training before, and will not effect businesses that depend on the ORV and recreational use at Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 865

**Last Name** White

**First Name** Charlene

**Comment** The land in Johnson Valley was set aside as an OHV area years ago and now the Marines want to take it over. Those that use the OHV area in Johnson Valley may not be huge in numbers in that particular area. However, the OHV community across the country is a strong but mighty group of people. The government is constantly trying to find ways to close public lands, be it military usage (as in Johnson Valley), endangered plants (Imperial Sand Dunes), endangered species (Pismo Beach area, Oregon), or environmental (Seattle, WA area). WHY? If all of the OHV areas are closed in all parts of the country, there would be a huge toll on the economy in general - RV manufacturers, off- road vehicle manufacturers (Jeep, Toyota), ATV manufacturers, repair shops, etc. We the people of the United States need and want areas to recreate with our family and friends. Please don't take another area away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps also understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 866

**Last Name** Rees

**First Name** David

**Comment** Families must have legal opportunities to enjoy recreational activities together.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 867

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Maintaining the Johnson Valley OHV area is crucial to the principle that the public has the right to use public land. OHV use allows a place for individuals and families to bring their love of the outdoors together with their love of vehicular travel providing a great way to bond with one another and enjoy the fresh air. Closing this area would be irresponsible and a crime against United States citizens.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 868

**Last Name** White

**First Name** Larry

**Comment** I used to live in California and have "jeeped" in the Johnson Valley area many, many times. It's an awesome area for this particular activity. It's very sad to me that there is possibility that there is talk of closing the area to OHV use. Is there no other place to train?

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 869

**Last Name** Mark

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** California motor vehicle recreation areas are under continuing attack by legislators and government agencies wanting to reduce public access to PUBLIC land. I strongly urge you to consider alternatives that will not negatively affect the access of this area by the general public. Reducing land access only leads to concentrated use in other areas, thus creating a greater environmental impact on those areas still open for use. Further, the off-road motor vehicle industry provides millions of tax dollars to the California economy each year; something that should not be underestimated in these tough economic times. As Alternative #3 has these least impact on the greatest number of people, I strongly urge the adoption of this plan. Thank you for your consideration, Michael Mark

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land

would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 870

**Last Name** Lee

**First Name** Nora

**Comment** Please vote for Option #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 871

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There has been enough recreation area closed . While i find the military purpose far better then most reasons id much prefer another area be utilized if at all possible and keep the recreation area open for its current purpose .

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 872

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** a

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 873

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV Recreation Area needs to continue to be open to the public for OHV activities and many other activities.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	874
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson valley is a family destination where we can 4 wheel safely and build are family bond. please do not take from us. I vote alternate 3
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.</p>

**Comment ID** 875

**Last Name** Hill

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** I would prefer option 3 if any option has to be exercised. Moving the USMC training ground to the east rather than the west would not have the negative impact associated with a move westward. The urban sprawl of the Los Angeles area is moving eastward. Taking a popular recreation area towards that sprawl is not in the best interest of anyone. Moving eastward, towards a site already deemed acceptable for military training by General Patton, is the only viable option. Please consider this as the only option. Please do not take our public recreation lands from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 876

**Last Name** Sims

**First Name** George

**Comment** My family and I love taking our children out to Johnson Valley for camping and OHV use. With the area being so unique for the offroading community, it would be very sad for not only my wife and I, but our children and future generations. Currently I have seen a couple of the proposals that have been submitted and agree with Option/Alternative #3 This option leaves Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. Rather, it states the Marine Corp would have to move the proposition to the East of their current boundaries. This would mean that the Government would need to de-designate wilderness area. Note this particular 'wilderness area' was used by General Patton to train military before it was designated as wilderness. The other Alternative de-designates OHV areas that are being used by Americans for recreation, living, income and more. Thank You, George Sims

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 877

**Last Name** liu

**First Name** tom

**Comment** I think johnson valley should stay open as an ohv area because it is one of the best places for our sport and it is really helping to expand the wheeling community. im only 19 and have not even had the chance to get down to johnson valley to wheel yet but i would really like to be able to someday.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 878

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support alternative #3, and suggest 29 Palms expand to the east as it will have less impact to the local economy, and it does not restrict recreational opportunities in the Johnson Valley OHV area. Currently designated wilderness areas to the east of 29 Palms should not be ruled out as potential training areas. Alternative #3 will support the necessary training areas, while having no impact on the OHV industry, an industry that is currently thriving even in a down turned economy thanks to customers who frequent Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 879

**Last Name** clement

**First Name** eugene

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a beautiful area that my daughters and I hope to enjoy multiple times in the future. We are members of the OHV community and it seems OUR land just keeps slipping away no matter how much we try to keep it open. I live in Wisconsin and when I think of dream vacation I

think of Johnson Valley. My parents own a house in AZ. and I hope to purchase it someday just because of areas like this. Thank you Eugene

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 880

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please vote in favor of Alternative #3 for Johnson Valley OHV. As an off-road enthusiast, I have been enjoying the deserts of California since the late 1960s encourage your vote for Alternative #3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 881

**Last Name** Mesko

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Myself and my family, friends, and work colleagues are 100% against any land closures in the Johnson Valley area. We are campers and OHV

enthusiasts who do not want to lose access to the land we have enjoyed for so many years. For the record I am in favor of Alternative #3 which leaves the Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 882

**Last Name** Geving

**First Name** Nathan

**Comment** I am an avid 4 wheel drive enthusiast and would like make it out to Johnson Valley sometime soon. If it is closes I will not be able to do that and I will have to take my tourism money to another state or stay in Utah. Please keep the Johnson Valley open to the public! Nathan Geving

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 883

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I feel that the 29 Palms Marine base should look elsewhere for land to use. There must be land that could be used to the east of the base. Johnson

Valley area is already in use by thousands of off road enthusiasts. I recently moved from Palm Spring, Ca to Yucca Valley, Ca. to be closer to Johnson Valley because I use the area so much and have for over 20 years. It would be devastating news to find out the area is closed to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 884

**Last Name** Jeff

**First Name** Leininger

**Comment** I've always supported the United States Military. As a LEO I understand the need for training, and having the proper training facilities / locations. As a LEO I also know there is need for stress relief, recreation and family time. Johnson Valley actually provides a place for individuals to have all three of these. The ability for the citizens of this great country to get out and enjoy the various terrains / environments is one of the things that makes this country great, it's also one of the freedoms the US Marines have fought for through out it's exsistance. I would hate to see this freedom taken away from us, by the very people who fought for it, and by those that gave their lives during that fight. I believe the civilians and the Maries can co-exist, as Johnson Valley OHV is but a very small part of the area being considered for use by the US Marine Corp. I would ask that you leave the Johnson Valley OHV ara intact and at the disposal of future generations, to use, visit and enjoy. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 885

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open. As a pilot I can see all the MOA, and restricted areas across the United States. Most of them are in-active or not in- use. It would be a waste of military budget and a huge lost the the area if Johnson valley were to close.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 886

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Joel

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open to OHV

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 887

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave this land available for public use. there are off road events I would like to attend such as King of the Hammers. i am currently building a buggy to travel the southwest with. this is one location i would like to take my son to. the public will lose out greatly if this area is taken over. we are losing public land at an amazing rate and soon our kids will have no where to go to enjoy off road motorsports.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 888

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open to the public and OHV use. Please consider expanding the military area to the East. Over time as more and more OHV areas become smaller or scarce, it's less oportunities ofr family/friends to go out and enjoy the outdoors.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 889

**Last Name** Ferguson

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** We should be free to see this nations natural beauty as nature intended. this is the land of the free but many of our scenic trails are being closed. Didn't you go out and camp in the woods as a kid. nothing even comes close to the beauty of a park, a trail, or even a paved road through the mountains. please keep the hammers open so all kids, parents, and grandparents can enjoy the great outdoors. If you keep closing land to the public we won't have anything to share with the later generations. It will be a memory and a memory is never as good as the real thing. It's not spending time with your children. you might as well kill the children's imagination right now. how about their comon sense the outdoors teaches so many things that can not even come close to imitation. with this simple letter i promise to always do my part and tread lightly. so that the next generation can enjoy the outdoors just like us and our granparents have. i would like to leave this open to the public to create and share memeories so that all is not lost. keep us outdoorsmen in mind we can't hunt,wheel or even fish in the cities please continue to keep these lands open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 890

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and

you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 891

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Nathan

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley accessible to off highway vehicles. This area is a great location for our sport, plus it is the home to KOH. We as the offroad community are fighting to keep public lands open. I have dedicated my life and my lifes savings to the sport of offroad and I would apprieciate your support as well. Thank you for your time!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 892

**Last Name** Morse

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the public. My family and I go there at least twice per year.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 893

**Last Name** d'auria

**First Name** chris

**Comment** johnson valley should remian a public ohv area. if you close this one you will loose all the people coming in for the events there, which will hit the economy of that area. second you will have people riding there illegally and could cause more issues. keep jv open

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 894

**Last Name** buffa

**First Name** patrick

**Comment** I support option 3. Johnson Valley for public use. Leave Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. The Marine Corp will have to move the proposition

to the East of their current boundaries. The Government would need to de-designate wilderness area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 895

**Last Name** raber

**First Name** dustin

**Comment** i bring my family to the hammers in johnson valley all the time. dont shut it down

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 896

**Last Name** Cardenas

**First Name** Andres

**Comment** Hello As a long time user of Johnson Valley OHV, I understand that our armed services need to expand their training areas however, expanding into the Johnson Valley OHV area is not a good solution to the issue. I would like to state that I am all for option #3 as it can More compatible areas with the proposed action, as it has the following reasons Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated The area has already been used by the military in the past Economy will be less affected

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 897

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would hate to see the Johnson Valley OHV area closed to the public. One thing I would like to do during my lifetime is to get out to California with my Jeep and wheel at the nation's most iconic locations. Johnson Valley is at the top of my list, along with the Rubicon Trail. Four wheeling is part of America's history and I would like it if the government put out some effort to keep it that way. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 898

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Jonhson Valley open. There are not many OHV area where we can take our kids without driving more than 2 hours and where we dont disturb anyone.We also cant aford to go any further with the cost of Gas prices and if you close the park that will mean no more quality vation time away from school and work for my family and many others.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 899

**Last Name** Parisi

**First Name** Angelo

**Comment** the hammers is one of the best 4x4 spots in the country. its one of the reasons i live in CA. please don't close the hammers.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 900

**Last Name** Bugbee

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I have spent an extensive amount of time at 29 Palms and cannot fathom why you would do this expansion to the west. Worse yet, do it in a way that takes away from the very people who support you when there is another obvious choice. I know that the 4 wheeling community supports Marines more than any NY Times reader, or latte drinking hippie. They battle with the EPA and other government organizations to keep their ORV areas open, much the same way you get your training facilities scrutinized. I never dreamed the USMC would work against ORV park users. The oppressed has become the oppressor. Shame on you! I might point out King of the Hammers event draws over 30,000 people in to spend money in the local economy. The economy that the spouses of service members work in order to make ends meet. The same one that supports you. I am truly saddened that my Marine Corps would not recognize this. You need to leave the ORV area intact all year long. Please expand to the East ( Alternative #3) Because it has: No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley More compatible areas with the proposed action Less impact to local business owners Less impact to all recreational opportunities It is less populated Been used by the military in the past \*\*And it shows respect for the people who love and support you!\*\* You and I both know you will not open the area to the west after exercises for public use. One live round left behind gets it shut it down forever. One oil drip that you get fined by the EPA for ΓÇª same deal. I always have taken pride in the fact the Marines use common sense. Please demonstrate your ability to overcome and adapt. Please demonstrate your ability to respect others in the same way you wish to be respected. Please expand east. Semper Fi

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

<b>Comment ID</b>	901
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson Valley is home to one of the biggest events in rock crawling. I am a Marine and I have gone up to Johnson Valley a good amount of times for dirt bike riding and to attend KOH. This area is to important to the off-roading community to be taken away.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	902
<b>Last Name</b>	Huckins
<b>First Name</b>	Rob
<b>Comment</b>	I would respectfully request Alternative #3.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 903

**Last Name** Nash

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** As an avid outdoor enthusiast, amateur historian and frequent visitor to Johnson Valley I must express my deep concern over the possibility of losing the Johnson Valley OHV area to an expansion of 29 Palms. While it is true that I support the need to properly train and equip our troops, this proposed expansion threatens to take valuable open land from the public domain. In California there is very little land that is open to as wide a variety of uses as is Johnson Valley, and none of these open areas have the diversity of geology, history or topography. Furthermore, the expansion of the base and increased usage will have detrimental effect on the residences in Landers and Johnson Valley area, as well as a negative economic impact upon the businesses who rely on JV visitors and users who purchase their products and services. Finally, the loss of the most significant off-road open space in Southern California will likely only cause degradation of other lands in the surrounding areas, and significantly increase congestion and related problems in the remaining open land spaces. Having reviewed the proposed expansion plans, I feel that only 2 are suitable at this time: \* Alternate Proposal #3 - which provides for an expansion of the base to the East, and \* Alternate Proposal #7 - which does not provide for any expansion beyond the current base boundaries. If you must expand, go East Marines, go East! Regards, -Brian

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 904

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand the need for practice land, tho there is a lot of unused land else where to have fun on. There is slot of fun racing out there and off roaring. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 905

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** OFFROADING IS ONE OF THE FEW REMAINING ACTIVITIES THAT FAMILIES CAN PARTICIPATE IN TOGETHER SAFELY. IT IS BECOMMING HARDER AND HARDER TO FIND LEGAL PLACES TO RIDE AND JEEP. tHE COMMUTES TO LEGAL AREAS ARE BECOMMING LONGER AND LONGEER AS WELL. pLEASE

CARFULLY CONSIDER THE REMOVAL OF ANY MORE LAND FROM THE PUBLIC DOMAIN AND EXPLORE ALL OPTIONS FOR LAND NEEDED FOR TRAINING.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 906

**Last Name** SEMBACH

**First Name** RALPH

**Comment** The needs of off-road recreational groups far out way additional training area needs. This will further impact the defense budget and costing more than expected to the American taxpayer.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 907

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Enough already. You've already taken way to much family recreation areas away from all of us. Family first. Wars (even training) aren't even close to what this country needs.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 908

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i have not been there yet but i hope to make it in the next couple of years so i hope it stays open to 4 wheeling!! we all need somewhere to wheel!! B Coffey

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 909

**Last Name** Watt

**First Name** Jim

**Comment** My family has been using Johnson Valley Offroad Vehicle area for 3 generations. We spend 8 to 10 weekends a year using the area. Our family makes it a point to buy our supplies from the local area. Over the last few years we have spent thousands of dollars to enjoy the area. Please keep the area open for public use. My family would be devastated with the loss of Johnson Valley. Sincerely, The Watt Family

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 910

**Last Name** Starkey

**First Name** Dave

**Comment** I do not support the Marine Corp taking over the OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 911

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson valley OHV area is a special OHV are with things not found anywhere else in the country. Please consider not expanding to this area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 912

**Last Name** Stapish

**First Name** Adam

**Comment** I respectfully requeast that you please do not expand the base into the Johnson Valley OHV area... Not only would the expansion hinder access to the already shrinking OHV riding area options but most importantly I believe we all fear that these closures are becoming all too frequent... I'd like to be able to take my kids there unobstructed some day

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 913

**Last Name** Minor

**First Name** Sean

**Comment** As an avid 4 wheeler and an outdoor recreationalist, I strongly support Alternative 3 and strongly appose the Marine Corp from acquiring Johnson Valley. The public has already lost many roads, trails and open areas in National Forests and BLM lands to recreate in. Johnson Valley is unique and one of the last areas of its kind for 4 wheeling that is still open to the public. I urge the Marine Corp to expand its operation to the east into what is now Wilderness. The Wilderness area does not have nearly the public use that Johnson Valley has and after all, was once used by the military for training and other uses.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 914  
**Last Name** Madden  
**First Name** Robert  
**Comment** I would advise option 3 so as not to complicate an already complicated process for events held at JOhnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 915

**Last Name** Curry

**First Name** James

**Comment** I vote for Alternative #3!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 916

**Last Name** Lewis

**First Name** Timothy

**Comment** I would like to see Alternative #3 used. It would allow ORV to use Johnson Valley, and the Marines to once again use the area to the east that Patton used. It effects the least amount of people that would have to relocate.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 917

**Last Name** Cushing

**First Name** Joshua

**Comment** As a tax paying citizen, I would like these lands to be kept open for public use. In order for our economy to recover, I feel the land should not be taken over at this time and left open for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 918

**Last Name** Lewis

**First Name** Timothy

**Comment** I would like to see Alternative #3 used. It would allow ORV to use Johnson Valley, and the Marines to once again use the area to the east that Patton used. It effects the least amount of people that would have to relocate.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 919  
**Last Name** Blair  
**First Name** Andrew  
**Comment** Regarding the Twenty Nine Palms Marines land expansion. I am in favor of Alternative #3. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 920

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave Johnson valley open to the public as i have been going there for over 20 years to off road and camp. It would be a shame to loose that area to the military as they have other options to train.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 921

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The marine Corp already has plenty of land. They don't need to take more from us Think of how it would impact the locals and therrre buiness's it would ruin them and add to the downfall of this economy

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 922

**Last Name** Brown

**First Name** Timothy

**Comment** My family and I use and enjoy this area routinely and am opposed to this

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 923

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The government has already close the Tellico trails in North Carolina leaving much of the east coast without a place to ride legally. This same fate does not need to happen to one of the great trail areas on the west coast either. I understand that the marines need more space, but that has no reason to affect this many people who are involved in an evidently dieing past-time thanks to the US government.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 924

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open. Its a really amazing place to visit. It is just way too nice to be closing it off for Military use. Find a different spot, keep this spot open!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 925

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Alternative #3: This option leaves Johnson Valley OHV area untouched.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 926

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I vote for ammendment #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and participation in the NEPA process. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 927

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family has been visiting this area for a number of years and it has become a family tradition to meet with distant relatives there at least once

per year. Closure would result in disrupting family gatherings. We have tried different locations but just doesn't seem to work, this is the only location that seems to work for all the different reasons. We enjoy hiking, climbing, 4 wheeling and have an extensive collection of photographs taken there from different times of the year. Please don't close out the public to their land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 928

**Last Name** Ashley

**First Name** Todd

**Comment** Please, stop taking our land from us! We have to much invested into this area for it to be restricted from public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 929

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment** Leave Johnson Valley alone. You could always train along the U.S. Mexican border. It's perfect with sand, underground tunnels, and smuggling.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 930

**Last Name** miller

**First Name** guy

**Comment** loosing Johnson valley would be horrible to my friends and family. We visit the place 5-6 times a year for annual trips. JV is visited by 30000 plus people during the week of KOH and every weekend that I go there are at least a thousand people there. The public is loosing OHV area's all across the country I hope that JV wont be added to the list. As it is one of the last remaining places to do all types of hardcore off roading.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 931

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please put a stop to over taking public land. By taking our public land, you are effecting the economy of a very large industry, as well as stripping the rights of the american people.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps also understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 932

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public! using alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the

Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 933

**Last Name** weiss

**First Name** billy

**Comment** closing down the johnson valley ohv area will be devastating to many californians as well as off roaders from around the world. many of us have businesses that rely on places like this to keep the sport alive, in order to feed opur families. we also enjoy the freedom of taking our families out there for outdoor recreation, a freedom that gets taken away with every land closure. - billy weiss

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD

determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID** 934

**Last Name** Walter III

**First Name** Robert T

**Comment** as an avid outdoorsman, and father of five, losing access to areas of Johnson valley specifically is a pretty painful idea as we have yet to enjoy it as a family. I sincerely hope the matter of land use can be resolved to keep it open to the public

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 935

**Last Name** Richard

**First Name** Johnathon

**Comment** When people are out enjoying the environment, people will protect the environment. It is human nature. We will protect what we love! We protect family, God, and The United States of America because we love them. We also love our sport. A sport that is under attack from environmentalist and businesses that believe certain land plots are better off used another way (a way that suits their needs). These people tell us we need to find new places to drive our vehicles, but the fact is, THERE ARE NO NEW PLACES! If it was easy to find new places, we would have. It is easier to relocate something that does not exist than something that is already here. Our park is all ready here. Please relocate your facilities elsewhere.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 936

**Last Name** Schubring

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley OHV open to the public year round. This area is phenomenal for outdoor recreation. Closing this area will negatively impact recreation opportunities as well as local residents. The option to the east of 29 Palms will not cause the same issues. Please keep our public lands open to the public!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands how important the Johnson Valley OHV area is for recreation and the EIS concludes that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation. Comments received during the comment period will be evaluated in preparation of the Final EIS and will be part of the record in front of the Department of the Navy when it makes its Record of Decision (ROD) about whether and how to proceed to meet Marine Corps' MEB training requirements. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed, then a formal withdrawal request will be made to Congress, and it will have to approve the withdrawal. If the ROD determines that land acquisition is needed then the Navy would also request that the FAA proceed to evaluate the Department of the Navy's request to establish corresponding Special Use Airspace (SUA), or to modify existing SUA.

**Comment ID**

937

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

All the reasons below are valid and responsible reasons. You know if the Marines use this area and think there might be one piece of Marine material or Ordnance left behind it will be closed to the public/ U.S. Tax payers for good. Move to the East and do a Fort Hood number on it and do what you need to do. The Offroad community is losing trails and recreational area by the miles yearly, fighting tooth and nail just to try and hold on to what is and has been available. Please reconsider you're options. Thank You. Reasons to expand to the East by 200,000 acres) No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley More compatible areas with the proposed action Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated The area has already been used by the

military in the past Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities Reduction in area for the film industry Negative impact on the economy May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities May promote illegal riding Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 938

**Last Name** Ray

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public as a dedicated OHV use area. These places are becoming fewer and farther between. I grew up 4wheeling with my dad and I would like my son to be able to 4wheel with his son one day. Thank you for your consideration. Tim Ray

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson

Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 939

**Last Name** Olson

**First Name** Geoff

**Comment** Johnson Valley is Very important for keeping open. It provides business for many small business owners, like myself, and also recreational time spent with friends and family. It is the biggest up and coming location for one of the biggest up and coming extreme sports.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 940

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

This land was set aside for OHV almost 20 years ago. I understand the need for training but the problem is that the off road community keeps getting pushed in to smaller and smaller areas. Between the environmentalist, the wilderness areas and now the Marines, the OHV community continues to get pushed out. If you want to take this area then replace the area. Give us some land that we can use with the same conditions and distance from LA that Johnson Valley is. Under plan 6, you want to share the area with us. Now you want us to get a permit to use the land. We have been using this land without having to pay for a permit. You want to restrict our use and make us pay for it. That is not right. My family has been using that area for over 30 years. At times I have had 4 generations there for a long weekend. My Father, my son & my grandson. My son grew up in the back set of our family Jeep and now his 12 year old son is doing the same. We, the American people believe in family values. My wife and I had been married for 38 years. In today's world with all the family problems. Divorce, drugs and gangs. Spending time with your family, instilling the rights values in your children is what being a parent is all about. You tell me, how many teenagers want to do things with their parents? I get asked Dad, Grandpa when are we going Jeeping? They want to be with us. That's what the OHV areas do, they bring families together. You go out to Johnson Valley on the weekends and what will you see? Families. Also under plan 6, there is a loophole that could keep it closed to the public if the Commanding General determines that the area is not in a suitable condition for public access. It is possible it could be just because of budgetary constraints. With the Federal budget in the mess it is today what are the chances of that? I support plan 3. De-designate the wilderness area. This area has been used by the military before. The area is less populated. It does not impact family recreational use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson

Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 941

**Last Name** Twamley

**First Name** Dustin

**Comment** Hello, My family, friends and I have been using the Johnson Valley OHV area for as long as I can remember. The OHV area at Johnson Valley is our primary getaway for family activities. Not only is it important to be available to my family it's also my primary outlet for spending money!!! I easily spend \$25K+ a year on trips to Johnson Valley, after you add up gas, food, truck payment, RV payment, etc... Keep families together, keep the economy struggling, keep Johnson Valley OHV area open! Thank you-

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 943

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There has be enough desert for the marines not to take away from southern California residents. The Federal government should be able to provide our military areas without taking areas away from public. I believe that I should be able to take my son camping in our state. Unfortunately, the areas are becoming less and less, please do not make another mistake and close yet another area off to responsible, taxpaying, families that have been enjoying this beautiful area for years.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 944

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hi I believe that the Jhonson Valley OHV recreation are should not be impacted. It is a valuable place for people of all types to spend quality time enjoying the outdoors in fun ways with friends and family.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 945

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support alternate #3f 29 Palms Land Aquisition plan

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 946

**Last Name** sellick

**First Name** tommy

**Comment** Power to the wheeler's

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 947

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Leave JV alone, there are other areas that are not used that would work better for the government to uss.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 948

**Last Name** Williams

**First Name** Dave

**Comment** We need this Johnson Valley area as more and more areas are being closed from the public off road community. There are thousands of people who use this area all through out the year. Help us save Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson

Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 949

**Last Name** Larsen

**First Name** Trevor

**Comment** Please keep this area available to the public for outdoor enjoyment for all generations. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

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**Comment ID** 950

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to request to keep the land in Johnson Valley, Ca. to remain open as public use as an OHV area. I am a disabled veteran, have had 3 tours in OEF, so I believe I have earned a right to vote on helping decide what happens to our domestic public lands. I am an avid 4x4 enthusiast who enjoys the outdoors and enjoys seeing the beautiful country I helped defend. I would be very upset to hear that another public use area is closed down and taken away from the public. Especially, since there is already a limited trail OHV lands available for 4x4 enthusiasts. Please do not make the wrong decision to close Johnson Valley, Ca. permanently from OHV useage. I am asking as a patriotic american, a veteran, and a believer of freedom. Thanks you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 951

**Last Name** Hall

**First Name** Dusti

**Comment** Please find other options rather than closing down any part of Johnson Valley OHV. I have not been to that OHV as of yet but I have only lived here in California for 10 months and I hope to have the opportunity to go enjoy the challenging trails in Johnson Valley OHV. That area is on my bucket list.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 952  
**Last Name** stone  
**First Name** larry  
**Comment** WHEN DOES IT STOP??  
**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 953  
**Last Name** Brown  
**First Name** William  
**Comment** I believe we are losing too much recreation lands and I will not approve of losing any more.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 954

**Last Name** Blosser

**First Name** David

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley for 45 years for off road recreation. I have enjoyed it with my grandparents, parents and children. It has been a tradition to spend major holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Years with friends and family out there. The biggest problem is that we the off road community are losing off road areas every year due to special interest groups pushing for wilderness conservation. I would hate to see another perfect riding area be lost forever. I'm voting for Alternative #3. Just keep things the way they are and please find somewhere else. Thanks for taking the time to read my comment.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 955

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been frequenting the Johnson Valley OHV area for years and have always had a great time out there. Its such a freeing experience to be able to go out in the desert and cruise around in those magical valleys and secret spots. I want to continue going there for years to come I feel there are plenty of other areas that are not going to impact OHV users nearly as much which could be used for this proposed military expansion. Please take into consideration the many events and fundraisers that happen out in that area, as well as the plain regular joes who go out and enjoy it every weekend, all year long. Please, try to explore other options in this that will not affect our beloved Johnson Valley OHV area in this way. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 956

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** keep Johnson Valley open as an OHV park. It is one of the most well known 4- Wheeling locations in the nation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 957

**Last Name** Evans

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** Please do not close Johnson OHV park. My friends and I use this park frequently as it offers some of the best 4 wheel drive offroading even if I have to drive from my home in the Phoenix area. My friends and I enjoy this area. It would be a travisty if this area was closed to the public. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 958

**Last Name** Newman

**First Name** Jared

**Comment** Johnson Valley is about a 14 hour drive from our home. But that being said, you need to know that it is one of my familys favorite places to visit about 2-4 times a year. I have a wife of 10 years, 1 boy 10 years old and our daughter 8. In my eyes Johnson Valley is irreplaceable. You just cant find another place like it. Everyone enjoys the Hammer trails, we love to ride our atv,s and ohv,s out in the desert. The King of the Hammers Race is epic! And the quality time my family enjoys together while recreating is priceless. Please find a way to keep this California jewel open to the public. Thank you for your time, Jared

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	959
<b>Last Name</b>	dixon
<b>First Name</b>	kyle
<b>Comment</b>	<p>please offer alternatives to taking over the Johnson valley OHV area. These areas are becoming more and more hard to find and they truly are a place that you can not replicate. Before a decision is made each person looking at this should spend a weekend out in Johnson valley. It is an unforgettable experience I pray I get to share with me son in the years to come.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p>

**Comment ID** 960

**Last Name** lancaster

**First Name** elizabeth

**Comment** Please don't shut down johnson valley or any desert. A lot of people love that place including me. Its a nice place to hang out and get away from the city! Please think anout everyone!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 961

**Last Name** Vassek

**First Name** Mathew

**Comment** I am a staunch supporter of the military and I did 10 years as a Navy Seabee. I know the more we bleed in training the less we bleed in war. Yet I also know that we need places to blow off some steam and have some fun. We all have hobbies. We all have those things that help us to relax and spend time with friends and family. The Johnson Valley OHV is the place. It is the place that my hobby culminates. My wife and I and now my grandson and daughter spend our disposable income on building a vehicle to take into the back country. The time spent doing it is wonderful time together but we also need a place to take that vehicle when we are done building. Johnson Valley OHV is one of those places. It is a place to test both man and machine. It is a place to meet with friends of a like mind and

enjoy the camaraderie that comes from a common hobby and common interests. I understand Johnson Valley OHV area would be a good location to expand into for training. But I also know there are other areas that could just as easily be utilized that don't already have a designation as an OHV area. The government has lots of land to work with sadly people who enjoy off road vehicles do not have those advantages. The areas we have we have had to claw and scratch to get and then fight even harder to keep. To take this area from us to use as a training area when there are other areas that you could use would be doing a disservice to all of us. and many of the people who you want to train there. Many of the people I have met there are military, it is also the place they go to enjoy their hobby. SO for us and your own, please consider other options, please leave Johnson Valley OHV alone for the use of all enthusiasts. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 962

**Last Name** Bell

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** To Whom it May Concern, I am writing this comment to inform you the Johnson Valley SVRA is an important part of my life. For over 7 years my family and I have recreated in this area to enjoy the raw rugged beauty of the desert, and explore challenging 4x4 trails. Countless friendships have been forged in front of a camp fire and on trails in Johnson Valley. I will be deeply mournful if the priveledge of using this land is taken from the public. I understand and respect the need for the training facilities, however please reconsider taking this special place away from Southern California. Thank you for this opportunity to express my view. Respectfully, Greg Bell

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4,5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 963

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am aware that the expansion of the Marine Base will cover parts or all of the Means Dry Lake area including what is an area called the Hammers. This area has developed a reputation among the 4 wheel drive recreation groups as a Mecca for the most difficult trails known to exist. The Jeep was brought home after WWII and that hobby was born. The hobby gained so

much popularity that Jeep named it's vehicle after the Crown jewel of off roading. The Rubicon Trail. The hobby turned sport as people pushed the limits of what vehicles can do much in the same way the Marines push the limit of what they can endure. I support the efforts of all our men and women in uniform 100 percent at the same time I support the right of the public to use public land. I do not support the expansion of the Marine base to the west. Thanks for asking!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 964

**Last Name** draus

**First Name** bryan

**Comment** with public land quickly diminishing this land means the world to those of us in the off-road community. I live in upstate NY and love the hammers as if it was in my own backyard. keep it open keep it public!!!! thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson

Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 965

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Although I may never get to visit the Hammers, I hope too one day. Demolish san francisco and build your base there instead please. Thanks, Jim

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 966

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is home to one of the greatest off road area's, and home of a huge annual even known as the Griffin King of the hammers. It would a detriment to all offroaders everywhere if it were to close down to OHV use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 967

**Last Name** Puder

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I have been enjoying the use of this land with my off-road club and friends for many years and it is the only place like it in the US for OHV use. I plan to take my family camping here when the time comes and taking this away from responsible OHV users would be terrible.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 968

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley open to the public. It is one of my favorite places to go offroading and dirtbiking. It is also where our offroad club chooses to go several times a year and the memories we have made there are priceless. There is no other place like it as far as rock crawling is concerned. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 969

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please don't take over/close JV, its too important to the offroad community. It would be like closing the Rubicon or the Dusy Ershim.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 970

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Sirs, I understand the need to train our young men and women of the Marine Corp, but to take away the Johnson Valley OHV land is wrong. In these hard economic times people need to be able to enjoy the access to a place they can go and fell free. Johnson Valley is a wonderful place that we take our family to get away from the stress of everyday living. Do you realize how many American families go to Johnson Valley? We are not allowed to ride our ATV's on our own property do to new city codes. Now the government wants to take away our stress relieving Johnson Valley. I would beg of you, find land elsewhere. There seems to be a large amount of land out by the Yermo base. We pay all our taxes. We do everything we can to help and support our country. Taking away Johnson Valley seems to be something an enemy of this country would do. Thank you for your time. I hope that you will reconsider taking away our access to Johnson Valley. Sincerely, Mary Paolini

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

971

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I've been reading about the issues affecting Johnson Valley ORV with great sadness and passion. Hearing that the area loved by so many of my fellow wheelers may be affected by government shut-down frustrates me. The area has been open to the public to enjoy, as well as the recent rise and popularity of Rock Crawling/Racing and the King of The Hammers. As the sport grows, its sad to see the areas that can house this sport diminish. Once my son gets a bit older, I had planned on taking him on a trip in the Southwest making stops at many beloved offroad trails; Rubicon, Fordice, and of course, Johnson Valley. If anything but Alternative #3 passes, I fear that I may not be able to show my son these great trails. My vote is for Alternative #3, to keep the public land open to the public all year long. We are being faced with too many land closures that our kids may not be able to experience what this country has to offer, camping and 4-wheeling in the great outdoors.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

972

**Last Name**

Galego

**First Name**

Mario

**Comment**

THIMC I am a Chief Petty Officer in the United States Navy with 23 years of service currently deployed. I am an avid off roader and the Hammers have been the best release for me after any one of my many deployments for the simple fact that it gives me a place to go to relieve, to think, and enjoy nature as well as the great trails provided. This is one desert that you don't have to worry about IEDs or ambushes. This land is therapy for me and many others from different walks of life, not just the armed services. I totally understand the need for quality training to better prepare our troops who will be in harms way but what of the troops that have been there and come back but some of them is still there? The personnel with some kind of

PTWS that is finding it hard to adjust to the real world as we know it. After Operation Iraci Freedom, My wife noticed a change, I noticed a change and I wasn't sure what to do to fix it. My good friend that I have been to the Hammers with before, invited me on a weekend wheeling trip and that did it. I knew I was home in the US, I knew I was safe but the subtle similarities of the desert helped me sort things out, helped me deal with issues and brought me home. I am not saying this will work for everyone but it worked for me and maybe it will work for our brothers and sisters that still have issues to deal with. This holds true for many civilians that I have taken out to the Hammers and the stories are all similer in that the peaceful quiet of the open desert is calming. I hope that you take time and realize this is more than just an offroad park, more that just recreation, and that every single person that goes to the Hammers supports our troops 100%. Thank You for your time and for your service to our great country, stay safe and God Bless. V/R Mario N Galego

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 973

**Last Name** George

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** I've never had a chance to make it out to go four wheeling in the Johnson Vallet are abut it's on my to do list please give me and other that chance to go four wheeling in one of our sport best wheeling area's.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 974

**Last Name** Mumford

**First Name** Wesley

**Comment** Please leave the trail section for public use

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson

Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 975

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For as long as I got into 4 wheeling and the outdoors I have wanted to go to Johnson Valley and spend a weeks vacation. This year, I finally got to go and spend a week watching the King of the Hammers race. It was the most unreal and amazing time I have ever had in my entire life. Not just for the 4 wheeling and the sport, but for the culture of the sport. I love it and Johnson Valley is a huge part of our sport. I can't wait to spend my week in February next year watching the same event and having the time of my life. It is an incredible place and we need to keep it open!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 976

**Last Name** Copeland

**First Name** Cheryl

**Comment** I oppose eastward expansion of the MCAGC. I feel this will impact wilderness areas that my family has enjoyed for many years. To lose the

beauty of the eastern Mojave to a massive land acquisition of this sort would be a crime for the present and future generations. All this aside from the travel routes and recreational areas outside of the wilderness areas. Please let this land stand in the public domain

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 977

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Sirs, It has been brought to my attention that Johnson Valley ORV area may be in danger of being closed. I would appreciate that all avenues would be looked at and all other options strongly considered. This area is, in my opinion, the top destination for ORV's in the United States. With land closures happening everywhere I hope Johnson Vally will be around for many generations to enjoy. Thank You Mark Hanson

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under

cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 978

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My best friend, my brother, is a marine. I have another friend marine 3/5. As much as i support them and our nations military. Johnson Valley is too valuable of an offroad resource and recreation area to loose from public usage. Not only do they support my stance, they have also participated in this petition. Johnson Valley is the mecca of the sport, the "holy land" as it has been called. These are the hardest and most storied offroad trails in the world. It would be a total shame to take them away from the American people.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 979

**Last Name** Stroud

**First Name** Steven

**Comment** I live in Ohio and belong to a club who have members who have been out to the hammers to enjoy recreating in the great outdoors.(offroading) I am planning on a traveling out for the KOH race as well as plan on taking my family there to vacation. This is a world class place for OHV recreation that would be irreplaceable in my opinion. Please keep it open access to the public. Thank you. Steven E Stroud

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 980

**Last Name** Watts

**First Name** Dale

**Comment** The military has enough land to practice in. This country is becoming more of a Communist country when the gov't keeps taking freedoms away from the people. It seems the more taxes we pay the more our freedoms are taken from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 981

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The continued locking up of federal lands from the public use is getting excessive.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 982

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an avid off-roader who moved to California from the east coast, I cannot possibly convey how much of an impact the seizure of Johnson Valley from the OHV community would be. Johnson Valley is the PREMIER off-road park in all of the west. Our school sponsored 4x4 club makes 6-10 trips per

year, and its 7 hours from our school. If a bunch of broke college students feel its worth saving every penny to go "wheel" at Johnson Valley, then imagine the heartbreak we experienced when we learned we may not be able to in the future. I'm simply stating my own feelings here, but I'm sure there are thousands of us in the off- road community that will be devastated if J.V. is no longer available for our use. Thank you, -Dan

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 983

**Last Name** ormiston

**First Name** todd

**Comment** this is r life off road please do not take one of the only places left . We also have a off road fabrication business

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 984

**Last Name** Bowles

**First Name** Kristofer

**Comment** Please keep JV open. Johnson Valley is a great place for well like minded people to safely wheel, explore, camp, etc. Public lands like this are vital for recreation

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 985

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom it may concern: Please consider keeping Johnson Valley open for public access for all disciplines of recreation. I have been saving money and building a vehicle for 4 years just to come and visit this area. The KOH race

is an awesome addition to offroad racing, and is quickly becoming the gold standard of all-around driving and fabrication skill. Thanks for your time,  
Blair Howze

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 986

**Last Name** Thordarson

**First Name** Oli

**Comment** Reasons to expand to the East No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley More compatible areas with the proposed action Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated Has been used in the past by the military Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities Reduction in area for the film industry Negative impact on the economy May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities May promote illegal riding Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)\

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 987

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to any expansion to the 29 Palms MCAGCC. The MCGACC has proven over the years that it has sufficient space and area to adequately train our Marine Corp. This proposed expansion, in this economic downturn, is foolish. Our government through our military bases in the west have enough land, i.e. Ft Irwin, Camp Pendelton, China Lake. That we should take advantage of we have instead of taking public lands that have been used by the public for various forms of recreation for years. My family has been land owners & neighbors of the 29 Palms MCAGCC since the late 70's. I have interacted with various members of the Marine Corp over the years and was told of the vast and unused area of the MCAGCC. So use what you have and leave what little desert we the people have left to use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 988

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is Mecca for off-roaders across the country, and even around the world. It has changed the lives of so many people, and created memories for even more. Please don't take that away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 989

**Last Name** Muzyka

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** The following are ΓÇ&commentsΓÇŸ for Alternative #3: [reasons to expand to the East by 200,000 acres] No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley More compatible areas with the proposed action Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated The area has already been used by the military in the past Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities Reduction in area for the film industry Negative impact on the economy May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities May promote illegal riding Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 990

**Last Name** BLAIS

**First Name** PATTY

**Comment** My husband and I moved to Apple Valley, CA in 2004. The whole reason we moved here was because of the lifestyle and because we were and are highly involved in the off-road racing/riding community. A year after we moved here, my husband opened his own business at home, a motorcycle repair business. Most of our customers are our friends who are fellow off-road enthusiasts from all around the Southern California area. This is NOT our hobby - this is our LIFE! My husband has built his business from nothing and has been very successful. We could not move our business back to Orange County, CA where we moved from originally. This is our life here in the desert and we do not EVER want it taken away from us. My husband was injured while riding in 2007 and is now in a wheelchair. His work and business has become even more important to him now more than ever. Please take my comments into consideration. There are MANY other people who's businesses revolve around the OFF ROAD Community and any change in the Johnson Valley OHV area that would mean having our land taken away from us for recreation and for our way of life would just be devastating to thousands of us!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g.,

Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 991

**Last Name** Chu

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley Open to the public. I have gone there a few times to go off roading and camping. I plan to make many more trips out there in the future to enjoy scenery and enjoy the land. Thanks, Kevin

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 992

**Last Name** BLAIS

**First Name** CHRISTOPHER

**Comment** My wife and I moved to Apple Valley, CA in 2004. The whole reason we moved here was because of the lifestyle and because we were and are highly involved in the off-road racing/riding community. A year after we moved here, I opened my own business at home, a motorcycle repair business. Most of our customers are our friends who are fellow off-road

enthusiasts from all around the Southern California area. This is NOT our hobby - this is our LIFE! I have built my business from nothing and have been very successful. We could not move our business back to Orange County, CA where we moved from originally. This is our life here in the desert and we do not EVER want it taken away from us. I was injured while riding in 2007 and am now in a wheelchair. My work and business have become even more important to me now more than ever. Please take my comments into consideration. There are MANY other people who's businesses revolve around the OFF ROAD Community and any change in the Johnson Valley OHV area that would mean having our land taken away from us for recreation and for our way of life would just be devastating to thousands of us! I am for the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

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**Comment ID** 993

**Last Name** Jensen

**First Name** Rory

**Comment** Please dont take this wonderful place away from the tax payiers that pay for it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 994

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

There are so few places left for the off road community to enjoy their sport it would be a shame to lose another. We are often misjudged as a group that tears up nature but the reality is that the large majority of us take better care of the trail systems and surrounding nature than any of the groups who look to limit access. From a veterans standpoint I also think it's in the best interest of this country to promote activities that get people and their children outside camping and wheeling in places like Johnson Valley as opposed to a bunch of xbox playing couch potatoes. Those couch potatoes aren't likely to be standing in the recruiters office any time soon.... Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 995

**Last Name** Ervin

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** Where to start. We as a family have been camping in the area for the last 18 years. We enjoy the park as it is. My kids have basically grown up there, we miss last year and my daughter expressed that she very much missed out on vacation time in the area. So we headed back down this year. This was our first year to see the KOH racing. It's more than just the park. It's the whole area too. If the park is closed or altered to the point where it's not fun then we most likely will not be going to the area. We spend a fair amount of money on food and supplies, not to mention other things like eating out in town. But it's the park that attracts us there each year.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 996

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I need a place to play, please don't close Johnson Valley OHV

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 997

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Ben

**Comment** Please allow me a chance to visit Johnson Valley in the future. I am an avid rockcrawler. I have left behind many passions to pursue this. Due to the economy I have not been out in over a year. I go to moab on a yearly basis, but Johnson valley offers an experience that is without equal, not even in moab. I have some great memories from my first visit, and would like to make it back someday. It's an experience that cannot be had at any other place on the planet. As a landscape architect, I feel it is an appropriate place

for rockcrawling to take place along with many other forms of recreation. A new sport was born there with the king of the hammers race. It would be a mistake to restrict access to this amazing area. I feel that there are less and less places every year to recreate which has a negative impact on society as a whole. Having said all that, I appreciate the great service that our servicemen give us. I have many family members who are vets and it means a great deal to me. I know there are alternatives and I would ask you to please consider those places for the great work that you do!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 998

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please keep public land open to the public, there are fewer and fewer beautiful areas like this for people to explore and enjoy. mike

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 999

**Last Name** Peck

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** The OHV area in Johnson Valley represents an amazingly important asset among the few remaining public lands available for public recreation use for the great many citizens and families who enjoy this land each year. As a career serviceman I understand the need for quality training areas, but fail to understand the compelling reason to close Johnson Valley OHV, even for only parts of the year, especially the particularly disturbing options which will leave the decision to open or close a California state (and truly national draw site) resource to the commanding general of the base, a great American no doubt, but a man who will usually have little or no connection to the citizens or their representatives who would be impacted by unscheduled closures at the sole decision of a single man with command authority and extreme pressure to accomplish the given military training mission but no responsibility to the impacted businesses or citizens impacted by closure. Several other options appear to strike a balance between public use and military mission. Option #3 which protects the public lands in Johnson Valley and provides for the military mission by returning land to the East of 29 Palms used by General George S. Patton for military training, and presently unused by the public, to the USMC for their requested expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1000

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** option 3 is my preferred

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1001

**Last Name** Bergman

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** As an outdoorsman / Jeeper I have been aware that the natural progression of our Government is to increasingly deny the public access to their lands. The Desert Protection Act closed massive tracts of land. Now that a budget crisis looms we can expect more parks and OHV areas to be closed. Option 3 is the most undesirable to the Marines but could be a better viable option for them if the SheepHole Valley is mitigated from the wilderness area under the DPA. This expansion east does not close any of the JV area to landing strip access, land owners, and OHV enthusiast. Utilizing Sheephole Valley does not affect anybody as we have already been denied use and enjoyment of that tract of public land. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1002

**Last Name** Mansfield

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** I am a stakeholder in this process for several reasons. Based on the usage that myself and my family have gotten from the JV Open Area over the past 40 years, and the possibility that this may be coming to an end, I must state that I am opposed to the Marine's taking any land to the West of the current 29 Palms Base. 1. Having reviewed the Draft EIS, I have noted that Appendix J is lacking the documentation of, or has minimized the importance of, a variety of cultural resources inside of the revised boundaries, and has missed some critical biographical information from local settlers in Lucerne Valley. I would appreciate being contacted so that I can provide the missing documentation needed to ensure that these sites remain protected if the Marine's take possession of the proposed expansion lands to the West of the existing base. 2. Various branches of the US military have left an unwelcome legacy on desert communities in the past. A prime example is the current ghetto in the center of Apple Valley that was once military housing associated with George AFB. The EIS needs to address the human currency that will be affected, including the livelihood of residents and merchants in Lucerne Valley. 3. Desert Racing, both in terms of Motorcycle and Trucks/Buggies, is a sport that is native to Southern California and remains a major source of revenue for a variety of businesses in Southern California. The JV Open Area is of critical importance to keeping these traditions alive. Any potential shared use of the Open Area

must have written/contractual language that precludes the military from polluting the shared areas with unexploded ordinance and expended ordinance that is harmful to humans. Most of the OHV community is currently of the opinion that the promise to share the Open Area is an empty promise that will be violated by a future lockout of the public due to hazards created by training exercises. 4. OHV use has steadily increased over the past four decades, yet areas where OHV use is allowed have continued to shrink. The OHV community is already faced with overcrowding and dangerous conditions on holiday weekends. This will be dramatically exacerbated if the JV Open Area becomes unusable by the general public. Repeated calls for Mitigation in the form of other desert lands being opened up to OHV use have gone unanswered by both the Marine's and the BLM. In order for the EIS to be complete, this must be addressed. 5. The desert tortoise is an endangered species that has been high on the radar in the Mojave Desert for many years now. Moving tortoises as part of the recent expansion of Fort Irwin has been disastrous to the local tortoise population. Relocating tortoises is not a valid method of mitigation and some other form of mitigation should be addressed. Regards, Michael Mansfield

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to cultural resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.11). As noted in the EIS, impacts to cultural resources would be significant under any action alternative.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The section has been updated to acknowledge impacts to specific communities.

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In

addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regard to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1003
<b>Last Name</b>	stein
<b>First Name</b>	adam
<b>Comment</b>	The Hammers is one of the greatest wheeling locations in the world.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p>
<b>Comment ID</b>	1004
<b>Last Name</b>	sahar
<b>First Name</b>	alon
<b>Comment</b>	leave Johnson valley alone as a veteran of the spacial forces i do recognize the importance of the training areas. but this place is one of a kind the only one in the world that as such a unique conditions leave it open there are many other places that can be used for the same purpose we as a club wheeling at JV almost every other week. leave it open there not many OHV areas that left open in ca ALON .
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered

and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1005
<b>Last Name</b>	Mooneyham
<b>First Name</b>	Gene
<b>Comment</b>	Closing, or even limiting access to Johnson Valley offroad area would severely limit choices for recreational rock crawling, motorcycle racing, and general desert recreation. Although I live in Arizona, my family and friends enjoy the Johnson valley experience quite often. I would like for my grand children to enjoy Johnson Valley as much as my family has for the past 40 years. Please consider the needs of the general public in your decision. Sincerely, Gene Mooneyham
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1006

**Last Name** sahar

**First Name** alon

**Comment** leave Johnson valley alone as a veteran of the spacial forces i do recognize the importance of the training areas. but this place is one of a kind the only one in the world that as such a unique conditions leave it open there are many other places that can be used for the same purpose we as a club wheeling at JV almost every other week. leave it open there not many OHV areas that left open in ca ALON .

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1007  
**Last Name** Madsen  
**First Name** Derek  
**Comment** Alternative #3 is the best option.  
**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1008  
**Last Name** Graham  
**First Name** Luke  
**Comment** Don't close Johnson Valley! I have always wanted to wheel there and don't want to miss out! -Luke  
**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1009  
**Last Name** Himmel  
**First Name** Marissa  
**Comment** Alternative #3 is the best option  
**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1010  
**Last Name** hickman  
**First Name** jack

**Comment** The recreational value of the johnson valley area provides untold opportunities both publicly and of a fiscal nature all over the country. I regularly vacation in the area spending both time an money in the surrounding communities. Losing this vast recreational resource when there are equally valid sites for the new intallation would be seriously irresponsible.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson

Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1011

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been a resident of Johnson Valley since 1994. The proposed expansion of the military base will have a devastating impact on the local economy and property values. Please don't destroy Johnson Valley with your senseless proposal. It's my understanding that of all the alternatives, the proposal called, Alternative #3 make the most sense, it allows for the base expansion, minimizes the impact on the local economy and keeps one of the last open riding areas available for public use, as well as preserves the environment. From the meetings it appears that the area described as Alternative #3 was already used for military operations, so the personnel at the base should be aware of its potential to run the proposed military drills. Given the current state of the economy one has to wonder why the Marines are declaring war on the people of Johnson Valley. It's my understanding that the base is primarily used for artillery drills. Why do you want to drop ordinance within a mile of where people live? And, it seems highly unlikely that anyone in command would drop bombs on our own troops. Finally, from experience, as outlined the proposed drills have not been needed since WWI. Apparently the Marines are going back to donkeys and push carts. It would appear that this is simply a land grab. Grow up! Assuming anyone at the base has any sense, it would appear that an acceptable proposal would consider the current land use, the impact on those activities, the benefit to the community, impact on local business owners, safety of the local residence, affect on local ground water supplies, and potential affect on the local biological resources. Of all the bad choices, Alternative #3 seems to be the only choice. Hopefully, someone reads this and wakes up before Johnson Valley is turned into a memory.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1012

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I URGE YOU NOT TO CLOSE THE VALLEY, this place is sacred to a lot of people who love the sport off off road driving. closing these places not only harms the space this country has allotted us to have as a national park, but as a place that so many people call a vacation destination. These places are essential to our way of life! please reconsider! thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1013

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Johnson Valley has served as a recreation area for my friends and family for years. To use this part of the desert would take away one of the prime public recreation areas. It is used highly and maintained by several groups. This is not just another random area of unused desert, but is one of the most highly used recreation areas in the State. Please consider keeping this area open and available to future generations.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1014

**Last Name** Bear

**First Name** John

**Comment** We don't have many areas open where we can enjoy this form of recreation please don't take away any more ohv parks.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1015

**Last Name** eckhardt

**First Name** greg

**Comment** I spent well over 500 dollars going to the king of the hammers in 2011. Not to mention i got a job working full time just so i could pursue my dream of racing. If you shut this down you will be shutting down my dreams, My economic contributions to our state economy and part of what makes this state so great. I know this will probably never be read and you probably really dont care about us wheelers, But the amount of money spent towards this fueling our economy is HUGE. Probably more intertwined into our economy than you could ever imagine. To conclude Shutting down johson valley OHV isnt just shutting down the king of the hammers its shutting down our economy. Heres hoping you see the disaster your creating before its too late. -Greg

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1016
<b>Last Name</b>	Butler
<b>First Name</b>	Tracy
<b>Comment</b>	There aren't many places left for us wheelers... This is one of the very few that I enjoy. Please leave hammers OPEN!
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/14/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p>

**Comment ID** 1017

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I implore you to please reconsider closing the Johnson Valley OHV area. As many others have stated this is not only an "offroad park" but rather a pinnacle of the sport. This place is legendary to everyone who has ever had the opportunity to go there and makes an impression that lasts long after the riding is done. This park is the Grand Canyon of places to ride and if it is lost the sport will most certainly never be the same so once again I ask you to please consider other options. Derek

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1018

**Last Name** Denny

**First Name** Stacy

**Comment** Please leave hammers open. We don't have enough places to have fun anymore. It would be horiable it you took this away too!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1019

**Last Name** Butler

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** We don't have anywhere to go wheeling like this where we won't get a ticket for having fun. SO please Don't take hammers away!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson

Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1020

**Last Name** Butler

**First Name** Ann

**Comment** Please don't give hammers away.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1021

**Last Name** TULLIS

**First Name** Douglas

**Comment** I have been riding Johnson Valley since the 60s and like my Grand kids to due the same. it would be a same to close the biggest OHV area in Ca.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1022

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a resident of the state of California, and avid outdoor enthusiast, I feel that alternative #3 presents the best possible arrangement and use of the area in question.

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1023

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close down Johnson Valley OHV park. Johnson Valley is one of the last places to truly wheel and shutting it down will force users to go elsewhere. More often than not, for the less thoughtfull, that results in people riding and driving in illegal areas. Johnson Valley is the pinnacle of hardcore offroad sites and the promise land to many offroad enthusiasts. If the marines need more space to practice, I would suggest nevada. Not much there anyways. Kevin

**Date Comment Received** 4/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1024

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep our OHV parks open

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1025

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please, please, please do not prohibit the public from using what little public is still available! We appreciate the need for training, but believe there are better areas than this. Johnson Valley has been historically a special place where families can go to get out of the city and be with nature. Areas such as this are getting more scarce every day. Please find a way to compromise, leaving the public land open for the public. Otherwise, what use is freedom?

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The

Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1026

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to say that Johnson Valley has been one of the things in life I live for. I plan my life around this place. I spend way to much time and money building my off road truck just to drive the rock trails in this area. I have been to a lot of other spots to off road, but none of them offer what Johnson Valley has. I understand why the Marines want to use this area, but I hope it does not happen. This place really does mean this much to me. Thanks for reading this, Chris Navarre

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1027

**Last Name** Rants

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Johnson Vally is a one of a kind area and everyone should have a chance to see it. To the off road community its like going to yellow stone or any other national monument.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1028

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Off-road sports are rapidly losing ground. I live in the East where public land is all but non-existent now. My family and I sorely miss the wide open free-access public land in the West where we spent our first 40 years. Here in the East we are left to shopping, eating out, and going to the movies. Please, please help us to keep our public lands available to the outdoor activities we love.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1029

**Last Name** McLean

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley for 6 years now and it has always been a great safe place to offroad. This place has the potential to benefit our future and the future of our kids. This area needs to stay open!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1030

**Last Name** WESTOVER

**First Name** STEVE

**Comment** Please don't close the Johnson Valley/29 Palms Area. This is an area my wife and I along with our kids and family frequent throughout the year. We enjoy taking weekend vacations to go camping. It's also a place my father

used to take me when I was a child. We enjoyed many years of fantastic desert outings, camping, and riding our recreational vehicles. This vast open desert area means the world to me and my family as well as dozens and dozens of my friends and their families. I don't want these to become just memories of the past...i beg that you allow this to be open for us to enjoy for years to come. Thanks you!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1031

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support having adequate training for our military, but I am opposed to the proposed Marine base expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I've enjoyed riding my motorcycle or driving my truck through California's deserts for over 30 years. I've seen some really amazing places. It concerns me to see so many public lands being closed to the public. The amount of open land available for off road recreation is only a fraction of what it was when I was a kid. The Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the few remaining large open OHV areas in California. People come from all over the state for various types of competition events. Although I live in the San Diego area, I go out to Johnson Valley for motorcycle races, off road car races, or just to camp out with friends and enjoy the desert. I want to continue to enjoy Johnson Valley and to be able to pass that along to future generations as well. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1032

**Last Name** WESTOVER

**First Name** KRISTINA

**Comment** PLEASE.....PLEASE.....PLEASE DON'T CLOSE OUR RECREATIONAL AREA! :) I have photo books dating back to when I was a kid...40 years ago....where me and my late parents were camped on the dry lake bed camping for the weekend. My dad would fly his model airplane, while me and the kids rode our little mini bikes and mom sat around with all her girlfriends. Very fond memories and great times. Now a days I am fortunate that my husband and my children love to go to the desert and camp out too! We spend every Halloween, Thanksgiving and New Years camping and enjoying the desert year after year. I could also name another 10 x's a year or so we go out to the 29 Palms/Johnson Valley Area to escape our daily routine and live, love and laugh! I LOVE THIS AREA AND BEG YOU DON'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM ME, MY FAMILY, FIRENDS AND MY CHILDRENS CHILDREN. THANK YOU VERY MUCH!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine

Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1033

**Last Name** Davison

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I vote for Alternative #3 to keep Johnson Valley OHV Area for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1034

**Last Name** Boyd

**First Name** Nicholas

**Comment** We cant loose more places to offroad legally

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1035

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I have enjoyed the recreation opportunities in Johnson Valley OHV for many years. I would ask that consideration be given for continued use of the area for recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1036

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This area had been a wonderful escape for me and my family from the southern california city life. It has provided me a place to take kids that would know no other than video games and graffiti and introduce them to nature and physical activities and options. We have hiked there, Jeoped there, rode dirt bikes and quads there as well as camped and watched events. This place would be a shame for the public to lose. As a former Marine, I ask for serious thought to be placed into this. Semper Fi

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1037

**Last Name** Atchison

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** Please look for other options to expand your base. This is one of the few areas left for my family and friends to enjoy the great outdoors. We love the freedom the Marines provide us! But we can't enjoy these freedoms if our public lands keep being taken away. Please leave Johnson Valley available for off roading. Thank You The Atchison Family

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson

Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1038

**Last Name** Vierra

**First Name** Frank

**Comment** I have been wheeling @ Johnson Valley for about 15yrs. It will be devastating to the 4-wheel drive community if it were to close. Johnson Valley is by far the best and most challenging area on the west coast. It is also a great place to take the whole family. As more and more off-road areas continue to close. Please reconsider closing Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1039

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** i vote for alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1040

**Last Name** Rockwood

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** This is an area that my family and friends use several times a year and I would hate to see it closed.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1041

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** One of the possible mitigation for Loss of the OHV park of Johnson Valley would be to trade or exchange other Military property that is used only intermittently. As an example The east side of Edwards Air base has an expansive area used for low elevation high speed runs. This might be

opened for recreation part of the year . In addition the Fort Erwin has missive areas that are never used. Some of these could be opened for parts of the year. Also the BLM has close Most of the desert on Both sides of Highway 395 From Just North of Victorville up to Red Mountain. A equivalent amount of desert could be opened in this area allowing OHV use in these areas. OHV over the past 40 years has been chiseled away until now only a small part of the desert is open. Without opening up some of the closed off locations the total riding will be cut 50%. This will create a massive increase in Injury and Death since OHV over crowding will occur in the remaining locations. All ready over used locations will become dangerous due to crowding. The BLM could open areas that are currently Limited use and this would partly relieve the problem.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to

Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1042

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a mecca for offroading and one of the few places left that truly inspires. To lose this majestic location would not only be damaging to our sport, but deliver a significant blow to the outdoor adventurer spirit in Southern California. I urge you to reconsider your current course of action and leave Johnson Valley intact and as is.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1043

**Last Name** hodges

**First Name** mark

**Comment** I am an avid four wheeler and dirt biker and johnson valley is on my bucket list of places to go. The economy prevents me from going right now but i desprately want to go someday and it would really suck so have it closed before i can make it down there. Please do not close this! It would be damn shame to close this place.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1044

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please don't close JV. It means a lot to my club and I both as a place to wheel and a place to hang out with great friends.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1045

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I've been riding in The Johnson Valley OHV area since I was a little kid and I hope to someday take my kids there. It seems unreasonable that this base be expanded onto high use public lands when there are so many areas of desert that are completely uninhabited. If you need more space build a new base where there isn't an off road park that serves all of the southwest and is world renown for its terrain. Closure or reduction in size of the Johnson Valley OHV area would have a drastic negative impact on the off highway vehicle community. Lets keep these lands open for future generations to enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1046

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public. It has such a great history to everyone in the off road community. It would be a shame to lose it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1047

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson valley is one of the few open places for us to come together in large groups without a major impact on the environment. Many events are held there as well. I know people who make the pilgrimage various states, countries, and even continents such as Australia to enjoy what Johnson valley has to offer. The site is a world renowned mecca for 4 wheel drive enthusiasts world wide. To evict us from such a site would be a travesty. and the effects would be felt worldwide. I urge you, the honored and respected marine corps, to consider other areas for your needs. Thank you, Mason

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1048

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Thank you for reading my comment. I fully nrespect our government and the fight that they have constantly to protect my families freedom here in the United States. And I am thankful for these oppportunities that we have as a citizen of the U.S. I would like the Marines to think about taking a different piece of land other than Johnson Valley. This is a very important piece that has just found it's potential in the last 3-4 years. I have seen many people spend alot of money in their local towns in Colorado and in every interstate town from home to Johnson Valley. Just to attend this race. I personally spent over 20,000 in 4 months for this race. Alot of it went to Yuca and Barstow local business'. I hope these words help with the marines decision to move North or east instead of west. Thank You Pat Vigil

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1049

**Last Name** Williamson

**First Name** John

**Comment** Why not work with the Army to use the National Training Center at Fort Irwin if the Marine training grounds are not big enough? Taking away civilian land for the sole use of occasionally training Marine ground forces takes away recreation land used by civilians within the community for off-roading, camping, etc.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1050

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Id like to point out a few areas of the EIS that I feel are inaccurate or misleading. First one, where is the money to buy the mines and other expenses associated with the expansion coming from? at the ontario meeting I heard some numbers, those numbers where \$50-100mil to buy the mines and other private land and up to \$500mil to complete the expansion. I do not see that covered in the EIS. Id much rather the tax payers dollars be spent on debt recovery rather then expanding the already largest base. what kind of impact does that money accompanied with the money that will be spent on the new training exercises place on the nation debt? Secondly I feel the 25% reduction in local tax income is more then the listed "less than significant". I have been in the cities of lucerne and Apple valley on a big race weekend and literally every store,gas station, and restaurant along Bear Valley RD is packed with offroad related people purchasing products. that income accompanied with the thousands of people that are out there every weekend has to play a significant part in those stores staying open. one specific restaurant id like to be considered is "Cafe 247", I know more then 50% of there income comes from OHV users, even loosing that income for 2 months out of the year will be detrimental. do you want to turn Lucerne valley into a ghost town? next, Id like a study of the percentage of OHV land that has been lost over the last 20years in all of southern California to be included in the final EIS. OHV land is being lost due to many causes from green energy to protect species, I would like all of that to be included in the EIS. Lastly, Id like to get more details on the noise produced from the land expansion. The EIS lists it as not being significant, what qualifies it as significant or no significant? I know people that live close to other millitary bases and there houses are shaken on a regular bases from air craft and weapons testing. How would you like to listed to the on a regular basis? Thanks for your time, I hope some of theses comments are considered and added to the next EIS.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the Draft EIS.

The Draft EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the Draft EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1051
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson Valley is not just a piece of land, it is sort of a sanctuary for off-roaders. Taking Johnson Valley away from the public would be a big mistake. I personally love going out there and rock crawling and a lot of other clubs from different UC schools do the same. There aren't too many places like this in California for people that enjoy that hobby and made a career out of it (King of the Hammers).
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1052

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I urge the USMC to not expand the Twenty Nine Palms base boundaries into the Johnson Valley Offroad area. This would severely limit the available areas for recreational as well as sanctioned competitions for various activities. Expansion would also have a detrimental impact on the local economies of the communities surrounding the Johnson Valley Offroad area by loss of visitors to the area. Please reconsider any plans to expand the base into this area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1053

**Last Name** Monte

**First Name** Rocco

**Comment** I've grown up in the desert and have more memories than you can imagine out there. I would love for my children to have the same experiences it kept me off the streets. I was always tweaking my trucks and bikes instead of wreaking havoc around the city. I can't imagine how I would have turned out if I wasn't raised around that environment.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1054

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** Johnson valley is a place for family oriented activities. A place to take family members to ride motor vehicles peacefully and meet other people who share the same joys as you. Simply put there is NOTHING remotely similar to johnson valley ohv. Please dont take this away from us. -Daniel Baker

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1055

**Last Name** Maher

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** It really bums me out thinking of the possibility of shutting down Johnson Valley OHV area. I've been to Johnson Valley probably a dozen times over the past 4 years with my 4wd club. It is truly one of the greatest places to test a vehicles limits on the plant. The area provides some of the best terrain for recreational 4wheeling in the country. I am personally building a suzuki samurai rock crawler right now specifically intended for wheeling Johnson Valley. Every year our club participates in various clean up events and fundraisers for Johnson Valley. This note may not mean much in the big picture, but shutting down an area that is adored by so many is a huge deal.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1056

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a former member of the United States Air Force, and a current DOD Contractor supporting the US Navy and marine Corps NMCI Contract, I am well aware of the need to provide quality training to our armed forces. I also understand the need to keep our public lands available for recreational use when there are alternative choices that can be made during these types of

aquisitions. There are vast tracts of land currently set aside by several branches of the armed forces in close proximity to Twenty Nine Palms that can serve to enhance the training environment. China Lake and Fort Irwin are both within minimal flight range of Twenty Nine Palms as well as close enough to provide access to Ground Combat training ranges as well. Rather than lockup more public lands that will only be used sporadically, please consider joint use of existing lands already designated for military traing with existing infrastructure for testing and monitoring which will minimize aquisitional and setup expenditures.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1057

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley should stay open riding area for the good of all who enjoy riding motorcycles, driving off road, and off road racing. I have grown up in the desert and i would be torn if i didn't get to give my kids the same experience. Going out camping is a great recreational activity and should not be taken away, many people enjoy camping in Johnson Valley, let us continue! Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1058

**Last Name** Wright

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** I am quoting what Jerry B had to say about this topic in case you missed it, because I feel the exact same way and, well, no one can say it like the great Jerry Bransford can! Johnson Valley is a place I would like to see before I die and I know for a fact that many others feel the same. "Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With

that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us. Thank you for your consideration. Jerry Bransford Escondido, California"

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1059

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand the military gave us our freedom. Please stop taking our freedom and land that was given to us by our forfathers. We need to be able to get out and enjoy this great land. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1060

**Last Name** Schermann

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** As Retired USAF Msgt, I say keep Johnson Valley OHV area open for public offroad use!!! I served for 20 years so that I and others could enjoy

the freedoms of our great country. Alternative 3 is the way to go!. My son is stationed at Edwards AFB and I intend to visit him just to go offroading in Johnson Valley. Alternative #3 is the way to go!!. If the east area was good enough for Gen Patton to use our current Marines should be proud to train on such honorary terrain.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1061

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Closing Johnson Valley would be equivilant to closing Daytona Speedway, Indy, or any other major motorsport area. These areas are becoming more and more rare for the offroad community. I live on the east coast. I know myself and others have a savings just for trips to this area and areas around it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1062

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have not had the opportunity to make it to Johnsons Valley but have plans to do so in 2012. This is one of the premier offroad locations in the U.S. and is host to one of the most amazing races. It would be a tragic blow to the offroad community if this area were to be closed. This area brings in travelers who spend millions of dollars every year at the surrounding area businesses. This income would be next to impossible without the offroad community.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1063

**Last Name** gleason

**First Name** cary

**Comment** It would be a shame to lose some of what little land we have to offroading to our fellow brothers who look after us. I love the military but also love to enjoy some of our public lands. Please consider an alternative to Johnson Valley offroad area. Thanks, Cary

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1064

**Last Name** Smith

**First Name** Douglas

**Comment** While I understand the need for a new training area (I'm a Marine myself) I think that it would be a huge mistake to take over the Johnson Valley area. The OHV community is widespread, and comprised of people from all walks of life. There are many service members like myself, veterans, and patriots. These are responsible citizens who "tread lightly" to preserve the environment and country's natural beauty, while still getting out there to enjoy it. We support the Marine Corps, and don't want to hinder the mission by taking away a necessary training area. However, we believe that there is plenty of space in the areas adjoining Johnson Valley that both groups can be satisfied. After all, offroad events such as King of the Hammers, which is one of the fastest growing races, pump up the local economy. Over 15,000 spectators were present at this past KOH event, and brought in plenty of revenue for the locals, which would be sorely missed. Please consider our request when you seek a new place to train; there is no reason why we can't all enjoy the land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1065

**Last Name** Brock

**First Name** John

**Comment** over the last few years I have been visiting The Johnson Valley Area for OHV recreational purposes at least once a year for it's unique oppertunities and really wish to to continue this tradition. Johnson Valley offers OHV enthusiasts a unique experience due to it's varied terrain and it would be a huge shame to loose this area to the public. I'm positive this area draws visitors from all over the world, with a significant economic impact on the communities in the immediate area. Please lookfor other options in expanding Marine Corps base

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1066

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Save Johnson Valley for a OHV area. The military has always been good about letting civilins share training areas as long as there not impact zones.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

## Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1067
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Option 3 is the best for both parties.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1068
<b>Last Name</b>	Blake
<b>First Name</b>	Jeffrey
<b>Comment</b>	OHV land supports a major sport in this country. Closing down Johnson Valley will deliver a serious blow to our sport in an up and coming race that is growing.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1069
<b>Last Name</b>	Olshove
<b>First Name</b>	Michael
<b>Comment</b>	As a long-time military family, I am the first to support our troops and the freedom they allow us in this great country. It is the Marines and the rest of

the armed forces that allow me to enjoy my four-wheeling hobby; that being said, I join the others in the request for the Marine Corps to reconsider basing their training in Johnson Valley, home to one of our nation's best OHV areas. I live in Columbus, Ohio, but still have visited Johnson Valley on numerous occasions, because it is unlike any park that I can find in the Midwest or on the East Coast. The closure of Johnson Valley would be a detrimental loss to the recreationalist and four-wheel drive communities, as well as the surrounding towns that depend upon travelers' visiting their local park. I thank the Marine Corps for their service to our great country, and I pray that they might consider the desert areas surrounding Johnson Valley, and not the valley itself, for the future location of their training facilities. Thank you for your time and consideration, Michael Olshove Columbus, Ohio

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1070

**Last Name** Bone

**First Name** Ben

**Comment** Please listen to the wheeling community. We need our land also.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1071

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a former Marine, and a Jeoper. Although I have yet to travel to Johnson valley to wheel, it would be a tragedy to take it away from the Off Road Community. More and more places to wheel are getting closed and pretty soon our Jeeps will have no place to go to have a good time. Please consider alternatives. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed

MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1072
<b>Last Name</b>	Russell
<b>First Name</b>	Michael
<b>Comment</b>	As a kid, my family grew up riding and camping in the Johnson Valley area. After I moved out of state, I have kept up on the events there and now take my family on vacations there. There are less and less areas to use for off road adventure as places are closed, so please leave us with this on e for future use.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1073

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Todd

**Comment** In a country where Americans are losing more and more of our rights and freedoms everyday, freedoms and rights YOU ALL fight for, we need this land to remain open for public use. There are many, many other alternatives out there that do not provide the opportunities for research, recreation, competition and pure enjoyment as Johnson Valley. If one questions this, you need only see the turnout for the KOH Race and the recreation enjoyed before, during and after by the general public. As a veteran, I appreciate more than some, what it is you all do and provide for me and my family, and I say thank you. I also ask that you reconsider this land issue. My sons have yet to have a chance to enjoy the awesome adventure that Johnson Valley has been, is and will be. With all the resources the US military has, there surely is an alternative to this land for the training that we all know is so necessary. We do not have the resources available nor the options that the US Gov has, and what few recreation areas we do have are being lost on a regular basis to special interest groups. Please reconsider this and even see about a compromise that will be the best outcome for all. Thank you for the consideration and your willingness to listen to our pleas. Thank you very much, Todd, Jennifer, Alex & Koyt Broken Arrow, OK

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson

Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1074

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** alternative #3 for me please don't close the Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1075

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It is wrong to take away one of the last OHV spots in the Hi Desert. There is so much land out by the existing Base in Barstow its not right and you no its not.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

1076

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I understand the need for training space for our troops and I support them however there must be an alternative that could benefit the troops and the recreation community. I have been visiting the Hammers since I was a kid. My family and I have used this area for camping, motorcycle recreate, and Jeep recreate. In this day and age of the kids wanting to sit in the house and just play video games it's getting harder and harder to find areas to take my kids out for some fun in the outdoors. Taking away this land from the public will not only add to the land loss we have already suffered but also effect the economic surplus of 29 Palms and Lucerne Valley. This area is not only for recreation but also a part of some people's livelihood. Thank you for taking the time to hear our requests.

**Date Comment Received**

4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comments. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1077
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Expand to the east if you have to, but leave Johnson Valley and the Off Roaders alone.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1078
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Referring to the Johnson Valley aquisitionby by the USMC. WHY take this land away from public use when you can use alternative plan #3 OR alternative plan #7 and accomplish the same plans I am in total disagreement with any land aquisition that involves Camp Rock Road

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1079

**Last Name** Aastrom

**First Name** Dale

**Comment** Please do not take Johnson Valley for expansion of 29Palms Marine Base. Go east instead to where Patton trained his troops for World War II.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1080

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is home to one of the most amazing races in the world. I have enjoyed my time their along with thousands of others. Please do not take this land away.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1081
<b>Last Name</b>	HARING
<b>First Name</b>	PHIL
<b>Comment</b>	Hundreds of square miles for the Marines to take, and they want this? Sounds like somebody is bucking for political favors if not answering a favor. No, regardless of what fancy documents are spit out of the community relations office, tell the commanding general to look elsewhere. For Pete's sake, it's a big desert.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1082
<b>Last Name</b>	MIKKELSEN
<b>First Name</b>	GREG
<b>Comment</b>	The Johnson Valley area is much needed for good times with my family .

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1083

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to the use of Johnson Valley being used for military operations training. My family and I use the area for recreational puposes.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1084  
**Last Name** Storz  
**First Name** Steve  
**Comment** I support alternative #3 for Johnson Valley OHV area  
**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1085  
**Last Name** Lindop  
**First Name** Chris  
**Comment** Keep the trails open.  
**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1086

**Last Name** schultz

**First Name** jasonn

**Comment** WHEN I FIRST STARTED RIDING THE WHOLE DESERT WAS OPEN THEN CAME THE TURTLE LOVERS WHO GOT RESTRICTIONS PUT ON WHERE WE COULD RIDE THEN THE FLAT LANDERS STARTED MOVING UP HERE AND COMPLAINED ABOUT THE NOISE AND DUST THEN CAME MORE RESTRICTIONS AND WITH EACH ONE THE RIDING AREA GOT SMALLER. NOW THE MILITARY WANTS TO INVADE THE LAND AND I SAY INVADE CAUSE THAT'S WUT THEIR DOING DON'T GET ME WRONG I SUPPORT OUR TROOPS THIS IS DIFFERENT THEIR INVADING THE LAND THEIR SWORN TO PROTECT THEY CAN'T POSSIBLY EXPECT US TO BELIEVE THAT THIS IS THE ONLY OPEN RANGE IN THE COUNTRY THAT IS BIG ENOUGH FOR TRAINING. NEVADA HAS MORE DESERT AND IT'S NOT AS CLOSE TO CIVILIZATION AS JOHNSON VALLEY. So where's all these environmental activist now that their threatening are rights to enjoy the desert ? Or their precious wild life. Cause I'll guarantee the military isn't gonna stay on designated trails or give a Fuck how many turtles they blow up !!!!! SO GO INVADE ANOTHER DESERT AND LEAVE OURS THE FUCK ALONE!!!!!!!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1087

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Gentleman I am part of the christian based offroad community. We annually particapate in dozens of events all over the country. Sharing Gods word and the beauty he has created. Our dedication to responsible land use is second only to our fellowship. We annually sponser a gathering of like minded offroaders that numbers well into the hundreds. while this is small in comparision to the govt branches . Im sure you have considered the economical impact of these type of events, for a state that is already struggling it makes no sense to remove a revenue source that has counted on the access to our lands. Access that has been made available by the very freedom our military branches have fought and died to protect. Make us proud once again by protecting the use of this land rather than removing even more of the freedom this great nation has stood for. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1088

**Last Name** ambrose

**First Name** adam

**Comment** Taking away Johnson valley would hurt the off-road community. It would take away one of the biggest off-road use areas around. I have lived in the high desert for over 20 years and Johnson valley is one of the last spots to ride, jeep etc.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1089

**Last Name** Mitchell

**First Name** Natalie

**Comment** Save Johnson Valley for public Access! It is a great place for our sport

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1090

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Raising registration for ohv and taking away land doesn't quite seem fair. And taking away one of the best sites for ohv riding is going to drive more careless ohv riders and drivers through private and close lands

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates

several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1091

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Gwen

**Comment** As an avid desert visitor, I would respectfully request that the Johnson Valley desert area be maintained as an area for ATV & Rock Crawling experiences. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1092

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The U.S. government can't even afford work. But you are worrying about attaining more land in Johnson Valley to waste more money. Maybe you should worry about how to run a more efficient military. No wonder why there are so many people in debt in this country, just following how the leaders of our country spend.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1093

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Save johnson valley. Leave as is.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1094

**Last Name** sandlin

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** I use this as a recreational facility, there are fewer places that are available for use. P-lease keep this one open

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the

Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1095

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I hope you can continue doing your important training on other land, because my family and friends enjoy the unique geography of Johnson Valley that is not duplicated any where else in public lands.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1096

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hi, I would hope that Johnson valley OHV will remain an OHV facility because myself and my family have a great time there, and OHV parks along the west coast have been slowly taken away for other reasons. It would be like taking someones source of enjoyment out of there life. Thanks,

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1097

**Last Name** Richardi

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** Johnson Valley is home to many visitors each and every year for recreational purposes. I love our nation's military, but I think that there are too many people that would be upset by the closing of Johnson Valley. The neighboring communities are supported by the recreational visitors for income. They rent hotels, go out to eat, and shop in those communities. If Johnson Valley is closed, those visitors would stop coming, and would threaten the life of those communities. I'm sure that Johnson Valley as a training ground would not provide the additional income to those communities that the visitors provide. Thank You for your consideration, Matt Richardi

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1098

**Last Name** Halstead

**First Name** Bill

**Comment** I stongly request that Atlernative #3 be adopted for the Johnson Valley area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1099

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley shouldn't be touched, its important to many recreational activities of the tax paying public. Please find other land to use in your expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for

acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Thank you for your comment.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1100

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have lived in the high desert for over 30 years. Johnson Valley is the biggest and best place for off road activities in the country. I've enjoyed many off road events in JV over the years. These kinds places for outdoor activities are slowly but surely being taken away from the American public. We've lost millions of acres of land to wilderness areas, national preserves, national parks and other military expansions. Take a look at our country, especially California, and see all the public lands that have been taken away from the public! There is almost nothing left for citizens of this state to enjoy! I am a Vietnam veteran and understand the need for our troops to have areas for training but I also believe that the people of this country need to have places like JV to enjoy without fear of loosing access. I would not want to see the expansion into JV.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements

for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1101

**Last Name** Ammerman

**First Name** Rick

**Comment** My family and I have been enjoying the Johnson Valley for over thirty-five years. There has never been a season of the year that we have not been able to enjoy mother nature, at her best. To take away the use of the valley would be a great misuse of public land. I understand the need for training in the terrain that we will be fighting in, but I haven't seen much utilization of what you already have. There is a huge training facility at Fort Irwin, near Barstow Ca. that can be used for training in desert warfare. Swallow your pride and ask the Army to use their training facility.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1102
<b>Last Name</b>	Pekkala
<b>First Name</b>	Ron
<b>Comment</b>	<p>29 Palms land grab of Johnson Valley is a terrible idea negatively impacting the surrounding economy, taking away one of the last places I can bring my family to enjoy offroading and the desert environment within a reasonable drive of greater Los Angeles area. Blocking access to this area from the public when there are other options makes little sense, reconsider the people of this area and country have fewer and fewer choices and wonder why are kids become less motivated to do things outside when the outside is only blacktop and concrete.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS).</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p>

**Comment ID** 1103

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Let me start by saying I AM A PATRIOTIC AMERICAN AND APPRECIATE THE MEN AND WOMEN THAT DEFEND OUR GREAT NATION!!!. I do agree that they need the best of everything, including areas to train; however, I must say that I am against the full or partial closure of Johnson Valley OHV area without providing an additional OHV area of at least equal to the size of Johnson Valley OHV area. I grew up camping and riding mototcycles with my family in Johnson Valley. I feel it creates an activity that ours and many other families can enjoy together and brought families closer. I see so many familes enjoying this area together. I know for me it provide a place to escape from the stress of daily life and work. I go out their with friends and family and we aree all able to leave all the strees behind and connect with one another and nature and it does recharge the batteries. It's important. I know you area aware that JV OHV is the largest OHV in CA. The remaing OHV area are significantly smaller and the closure of JV OHV would create an over-crowded situation on the remaining OHV and increase the dangers for obvious reasons. The closure of the JV OHV will also have a devistating affect on many businesses and organizations thast rely of the folks that use this area. Many families will lose their jobs and homes. I am in favor of alternative # 3. I was made aware at the public meeting on 4-12-11 in Ontario that the Maries did not like this alternative because it was the most difficult area to access due to land formations. I wouldn't think the USMC would ever want to take the easy road. I can see where this would also give them the opprtunity to train their Engineers,etc.. in creating access for the troops. After all, I cant imagine our enemies would be will to negotiate at battlefield that provides easy access for our troops. In closing, please consider an alternative that does not affect JV OHV area or provide the public with an additional area of equal size for our families to use.Your decisions will affect thousands of families. Thank you for listening.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1104
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	My family enjoys camping and the outdoors. In the past we were avid off road enthusiasts...unfortunately, the economy has slowed that luxury down. In any event, i'm in favor of keeping this area open for all. We need to have a place for some local, good, clean fun! Regards,
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1105

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PEople who enjoy 4x4's, dirtbikes, and atv's are always getting land taken away. We organize cleanups, are good stewards of land, and WE NEED A PLACE TO PLAY! please do not close johnson valley to the public. We are losing places in Oregon as we speak, and it makes me sick.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1106

**Last Name** orszagh

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** Dear Sirs: It saddens me that you people did not learn your lesson 3 years ago. What part of "No" do you not understand? Leave Johnson Valley OHV alone, you should be ashamed of yourselves.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1107

**Last Name** Mokrzecki

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** I am against turning Johnson Valley into a restricted access training area. This land belongs to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1108

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I love the Corps and support our Marines. But I respectfully vote against taking Johnson Valley. The damn tree huggers have already stolen public lands for Americans to freely utilize. Offroading is a healthy family oriented activity that this country needs more of. Americans are being squeezed from all sides. Our ancestors had freedoms such as hunting, fishing and open trails. Sadly there is a trend of government taking away these freedoms. God Bless the U.S. Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under

each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1109

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** DON't SHUT THE DESSERT DOWN!!!!!!!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1110

**Last Name** Douglas

**First Name** Valerie

**Comment** After review of the EIS for Johnson Valley OHV area I am recommending Alternative 3 to be utilized as all other alternatives will promote several negative aspects to the area. Johnson Valley OHV area is a unique area for the off highway vehicle community as it allows for desert and rock environment in a small area. Closing the area to OHV use will not only impact literally thousands of people that come to experience the uniqueness of Johnson Valley, but it will also have a massive negative impact on the local economy as Lucerne Valley relies heavily on visitors to Johnson Valley OHV area. OHV enthusiasts travel thousands of miles to experience the beauty of the Johnson Valley OHV area desert and the difficulty of the Hammers trails for OHV rock crawling. The area is world famous for its 4x4 trails as well as the desert races and rock crawling events that take place within the OHV area. Additionally the OHV community volunteers thousands of hours to maintain the areas desert beauty, and it would be irresponsible for the BLM to dismiss those hours spent on the ground by volunteers both motorized and non-motorized. Closing any portion of the Johnson Valley OHV area and allowing the Marine Corp to take over the

area will virtually turn the town of Lucerne into a ghost town. This is not what needs to happen when our United States economy is still struggling and the value of the US dollar continues to fall worldwide. Furthermore, what the Marine Corp has planned if they take over any area of Johnson Valley OHV Area is to turn it into a bombing range and training grounds that will have more of an environmental impact on the area than even the largest OHV event in the area. The impacts are widespread from public health and effects of ground water and surrounding housing communities. Overall, Alternative 3 is the only responsible alternative choice given the aforementioned reasons.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1111

**Last Name** fillhard

**First Name** dwayne

**Comment** IVE BEEN OFFROADING FOR MOST OF MY LIFE. PLEASE TAKE IN CONSIDERATION WHAT THE IMPACT WILL BE ECONOMICALLY.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1112

**Last Name** Lahr

**First Name** M.

**Comment** I, as a taxpaying citizen, am requesting that the military NOT take Johnson Valley OHV area for training purposes. My family has been going to Johnson Valley OHV area for years and it is one of the last remaining open areas with varied terrain. The OHV community has been repeatedly shat on and had recreation areas taken away. My tax money goes to support both the military and OHV recreation areas. To use my tax money against me to close down areas seems un-American. I know for a fact that there are THOUSANDS of acres to the North and East of 29 Palms base. Please use that area for training.....as a matter of fact, there are already closed areas for OHV's out there.....perhaps that would be the BEST areas to confiscate for military training. It is not right to continue to strip away family friendly OHV recreation areas. We have given MORE THAN OUR FAIR SHARE ALREADY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Thank you. M. Lahr

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine

Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1113
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	I am not local to this area, but the area as a whole is very high on my list of "must do's". I have all intentions and am beginning to make plans to visit the area. Please keep the area open so I can have the opportunity to experience this great place. Please keep this "The Land of The Free", and not "The Place That Used to Be." Thanks for your time, Dave Williams
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area

approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

**Comment ID** 1114

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand that although military success directly dictates my freedom to enjoy Johnson Valley OHV area, it is a direct abolition of my freedom to have such areas confiscated by the government thus prohibiting public land use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1115

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I highly value what the military does for our country, and as a law enforcement officer I understand the importance of good training. However, the Johnson Valley OHV area needs to remain available to the public. Too many OHV areas in both California and Arizona are being closed due to budget and "environmental" reasons. Please find an alternate area to use. Thanks, Eric Roy

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-

sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1116
<b>Last Name</b>	Smith
<b>First Name</b>	Bryn
<b>Comment</b>	yet another citizen asking for johnson valley to remain and OHV area! we need somewhere to play or well go CRAZY
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/15/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1117
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	

**Comment** I am against the closing of ANY public use land in the Johnson Valley OHV area. It should stay open to the public as it was intended. The Military already has plenty of land with the 29 Palms base, and they should instead figure out how to utilize it more efficiently.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1118

**Last Name** Hampson

**First Name** Augustus

**Comment** The Marines have enough places to blow up. Leave this for US, WE own it THE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, Not GE and other assorted military contractors.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1119

**Last Name** Evans

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Johnson Valley represents a mecca which I have not had the pleasure to visit, but would someday soon like to.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1120

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing this letter in hopes that the OHV area in Johnson Valley may remain open for the public, for the families, and for the community of offroaders who pour their heart and sole into the sport. The biggest impact closing more OHV land will be to the economy, as hundreds of businesses rely on this market to support their business. Taking away OHV land will also take away business from these people, if there is no where to ride, there is no market for these businesses. Everyone understands the military needs space to do training for the war in Afghanistan, but what will you tell all these families whose businesses are gone after the war is over? A war that these businesses help pay for with tax money?

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational

opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

1121

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Please reconsider this land grab for the Military. Johnson Valley OHV is one of the last large open OHV areas in southern California. My family and I have been using this area for more then 20 years. With the recent economic downturn, the PowerSports industry has been hit very hard and is finally starting to see some recovery. Closing this area to OHV will certainly not help this recovery. I understand the need for our Military to train but I don't believe that this is the only area capable for supporting this scale training. In my opinion this is only being considered because the 29 Palms infrastructure already exists. The Military and US Government should be good neighbors and not force your will on the public.

**Date Comment Received**

4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening

criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1122

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to say that my family and I support our military 200% and agree that they need to train in order to protect us and our country but there are many people that love to ride. We only have a few places around here that we can actually load our family's up and go to for the weekend or just for a day of course Johnson valley being one of them and the most popular. It is my opinion that there is other land for the military to use. Please save Johnson Valley. GOD BLESS THE TROOPS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1123

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Stay out of Johnson valley. This is one of the few remaining parcels of land that families can enjoy off-road recreation. In addition, the negative effects on the off-road industry will be significant and detrimental to all business that already are struggling to survive in this economy. Your taking of this public land will negatively effect tens- of-thousands of US citizens.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1124

**Last Name** Bundy

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley my whole life and enjoying it for every type of recreation. It would be a shame to see it go to the Marines when California is so big and has so much desert. Please keep JV open to the public, it will help spread out recreational users from LA, SD, and OC. If you close it off we all have to go further from home and will concentrate environmental impacts to the remaining open desert.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in

Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1125

**Last Name** Seagondollar

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** Alternative #6 is the worst of all the options, it impacts the local and regional communities economics. A vast segment of the population from all over California, Arizona and Nevada travel to Johnson Valley for off-road activities, camping and community. Further closures of what are now designated off- road areas and specifically the proposed closure of Johnson Valley will have a significant impact on the remaining OHV areas. The intensification of use in other areas will create over-use. Dangerous conditions that will result in injury and death through over-crowding. It will stress emergency response systems required to serve the higher numbers of collisions and accidents. The proposed restriction placed on air-space, MOA's and Restricted Air Space will have an adverse and dangerous effect on General Aviation in the region by compressing already narrowed flight corridors. This will result is more general aviation traffic traveling through uncontrolled airspace. Incidents and collisions in the tightened uncontrolled general airspace with increase causing threats to life and limb to pilots and passengers. It would serve the military better to develop training systems which will train the defenders of this country in manner that imposes less upon the freedoms of those you are sworn to defend. Please reject ALT#6 it is not a viable option to those who already use this PUBLIC land. We have paid license, registration and use fees, for over thirty years, to maintain our right to use this land. Since the Marines primary duty is to protect the citizens of this countries Life, Liberty and pursuit of happiness I consider this "land acquisition" proposal in conflict with all three of those imperatives.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1126

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is California's largest public recreational area and is used by hundreds of thousands of recreationalists each year. Do not close this park.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1127

**Last Name** MENDEZ

**First Name** ROBERT

**Comment** THIS AREA SHOULD BE LEFT OPEN FOR PUBLIC USE ALL YEAR. THERE IS MORE AREA THAT THE MARINES COULD USE. THE AREA IN JOHNSON VALLEY IS A GREAT OFF ROAD AREA AND THERE IS FEW AREAS THAT CAN BE USEED FOR OFF ROAD USE

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS

finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. .

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1128

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This land has been a great place for me to take my family and be able to enjoy our local desert without driving too far. The marines should aquire land that is farther away from the city to do their training. There is plenty of land out there for them to use. leave this land for the tax payers to enjoy!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1129

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern, I am a 56 year old California native. One of the great benefits of living in California has always been the ability to make use of, and enjoy, all the state has to offer. The beautiful ocean and its' beaches, the mountains and their beautiful forests, the deserts and their beautiful wide open spaces. Johnson Valley is one of those beautiful, wide open spaces. The area offers the perfect opportunity for off-road, recreational vehicle use. It's location makes it ideal and easily accessible to the entire Southern California area. In these days of world turmoil it is easy for everyone to understand the need for our military to be as well trained as possible, however it seems clear that alternative #3 offers a workable solution for all involved. I don't feel I need to list all the reasons because they appear pretty obvious to me. The easiest thing would be to leave them as they are today, but if in the interests of national security the additional training area is imperative, please choose alternative #3, Thank you for your consideration

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1130

**Last Name** Joanne

**First Name** Cole

**Comment** Please keep public lands open to the public. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

**Comment ID** 1131

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV park and rec area is an incredible place for people to get away and enjoy themselves without the public getting involved and complaining about our hobbies. Taking that away would force us to relocate possibly encroaching on other people's territories which would cause problems. And the military doesn't need this great piece of land to destroy, train soldiers, and test weapons on. California only has so much open space, so we should conserve it as long as we can.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state,

or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1132

**Last Name** Collins

**First Name** Tyler

**Comment** Please do not acquire the public OHV recreational areas of Johnson Valley and Lucerne Valley. I enjoy riding my dirt bike there with friends and family on the weekends. There are limited areas to ride already and it will be a huge disappointment to lose another one. I have a lot of respect for the Marines and for anyone who fights for our country, and I understand that they need to train to be effective. Even with that said, I respectfully ask that the Marines do not take over the afore mentioned recreational areas. There must be some other area that can be used. Thank you very much for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and

4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1133

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** TAKING MORE OFFROAD REC.AEREA IN J.V.IS NOT A GOOD IDEA. Proposal 7 IS THE ONE THAT SHOULD BE PICKED OVER ALL THE REST.THE IMPACT OF ALL THE OTHERS PROPOSALS ARE NOT GOOD FOR JOHNSON VALLEY.I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE ALTERNATE OTHER THEN J.V. THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO VOICE MY OPINION. MARTY COVE

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1134

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Please look for alternative land instead of taking Johnson Valley away from us. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1135

**Last Name** Kemp

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** This is a vote for alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1136

**Last Name** Davidson

**First Name** Nathaniel

**Comment**

I am an active outdoor enthusiast that spends my hard earned money on activities that are American and look out for the best interest of my future generations. Family adventures and activities are the things that I only hope can be preserved for generations. Militant development is necessary, however when it becomes the large industry that it has become, I am starting to become disappointed. Once again I appreciate the purpose, but question the growth. How do appropriations for this expansion become available to the military and how does this lack of public access get addressed? I am not sure that having new areas to test bombs and train military tactics is high priority for anyone except for the specific leadership at the base trying to expand. Perhaps public opinion polls from third party groups could gauge that? My submission is that public opinion would not favor this expansion unless patriotic misguidance is applied. Please accept my comments as a Grass Roots American that wants to participate in all that is public about our country. I want my children to maintain a desire to recreate and explore. I want my children and thier children to have a life long skill set that would further a truly American way.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and

4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1137

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This is our back yard, we've been developing, building and using this area on a daily bases. How often will you be using it? Close it when you need it, open it when you don't? How many lives would it affect if you go to the east? Thank you for keeping our country free.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1138

**Last Name** Rice

**First Name** Tim

**Comment**

As a person struggling to make a living in southern California in the motorcycle industry, please consider my petition to keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open to Off-Highway Vehicle use as it is now. Riders in the greater L.A. area need places to recreate, and this is one of the few legal areas left within 2 hours drive. This will affect a lot of riders and further depress the motorcycle industry that is already being impacted by the slow economy and rising price of fuel. We pay high taxes and high DMV fees in CA that are supposed to be used for maintaining OHV areas. Please do not take this riding area away from those who use this area responsibly.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1139

**Last Name** Bruiniers

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** Gentlemen, I have visited Johnson Valley OHV area for over 45 years, First starting with my parents at the age of 8 and now with my family and friends. I do not wish this area to be cast to the "Remember When " section of my thoughts. Off road users have been squeezed into small segments by environmentalist for the last 30 years, This is the last straw. While your documentation is thorough, It is also very government orientated and confusing. It is my small understanding of your documentation, that by going east, it would have the least impact on the Johnson valley OHV use. So to the best understanding of this information - My vote is for Alternate 3. Leave The OHV area as it is! As a secondary comment - Fort Irwin is just up the street and you can shoot all you want- Is that in any plan ? Thank you for the chance to comment. Thomas Bruiniers

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1140

**Last Name** Whittington

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** My family and I enjoy the desert and mountains for their beauty and recreational diversity. We are avid off-highway motorsport enthusiasts and environmentalists and strongly oppose any effort to restrict access to motorized recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1141

**Last Name** Claud

**First Name** Nathan

**Comment** Please consider options that keep the Johnson valley OHV area open for public use. This is a jewel to OHV'ers in the US, and would be a huge loss if shut down. I have been visisting for 10 years, and have recently attended the KOH race. I look forward to recreating there with my family in the future.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1142

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please dont take the public land away. We're hard working Americans that spend most of our lives working for the freedom to enjoy our deserts and recreational areas. We go to these areas not only to escape the rigors of everyday life, but to spend time with our family and friends. Johnson Valley is in close proximity to the masses who enjoy such terrain and activities. Local businesses rely on the racers and enthusiasts for revenue relating to fuel, food, and supplies. Others rely on the land to hold sanctioned events. At a time when the government is taking from the average working person, let this be a time to give back and let us win one. When taxes are increased, we go with the flow. When government asks, we give. But we have to draw a line at some point. That point is drawn when we have to give up the freedom of use we worked so hard to maintain. Let us keep our land that so many rely on and appreciate so much. If there is more that we need to do to show our gratitude for the use of this land, then ask. Ask us to show you this gratitude. Guess what...? You've asked before and we've responded. Let us respond to this issue in an appropriate way and let your ears listen to our response. And furthermore, let your conscience act patriotically to the response from your fellow American citizen. I thank the armed forces everyday for the sacrifices given, and I thank you again for reading this in full and considering my point of view and response to this proposed issue. Take care.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1143

**Last Name** Martin

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** When making decisions regarding this project please keep as few things in mind. The Johnson Valley OHV area is the largest in the state and provides enjoyment to thousands of patrons year around. Users ranging from hikers, to OHV users, to campers, etc spend countless days each year in the area. Closure, even partially will substantially limit(nearly close) all usable land. Additionally the surrounding communities will suffer economically users that spend money on fuel, groceries, etc will no longer travel through the area. I hope that you take my comments and those of otherss before making any decision. Thanks for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1144

**Last Name** Lancaster

**First Name** Anne

**Comment** I am writing to you to voice my complete and total disapproval of the Marine Corps to take over much of the Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle Area in the Mojave Desert. I am not an off-roader, but a plant enthusiast. I greatly enjoy going to Johnson Valley to enjoy the spring wildflowers, (some of them endangered) as well as the numerous species of animals that inhabit this area- and have for millions of years. This area is OUR TREASURE-and belongs to the people of California! The Fort Irwin land grab was tragic! We cannot sustain another loss of more of OUR land. This land belongs in OUR hands! Many Victor Valley and Lucerne Valley businesses will suffer-if not downright close if this becomes a reality. Part of FREEDOM is having the opportunity to enjoy our public lands, without having to fight for what has already been classified as OUR land, not yours. Please leave it alone and find someplace else to expand.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1145

**Last Name** Ruth

**First Name** John

**Comment** The following are comments for Alternative #3: [reasons to expand to the East by 200,000 acres] - No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley - More compatible areas with the proposed action - Less impact to local business owners - Less impact to recreational opportunities - Less populated - The area has already been used by the military in the past - Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West - Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities - Reduction in area for the film industry - Negative impact on the economy - May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities - May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities - May promote illegal riding - Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality - Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon)

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1146

**Last Name** Watson

**First Name** Adrian

**Comment** I am not in favor of the addition of either air or land expansion for military exercises. there are already enough places available to preform these exercises without disrupting the people and wild life in this area. In addition, we don't need to be spending the extra monies to establish this area as an exercise area at this time in our economy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1147

**Last Name** Klein

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** As a fan, spectator, racer, rock crawler, event promoter, and general off road enthusiast I really hope that now action is taken in regards to closing the Johnson Valley OHV area in whole or part. The government through various agencies have been reducing the size of open recreational areas for years, and now they want JV. Stop already, enough is enough. If we lose JV, not only will the communities near JV be effected financially, but hundreds of small business's that depend on racing and off road activities that the area affords will be adversely effected. Please look for another alternative and leave JV to the thousands who enjoy the area every day.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

1148

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I am a US Army Infantry Veteran and would like Johnson Valley to remain open to the public year round. I am also a supporter of the off-road and US Military communities and would like to see an amicable resolution to this situation where both sides are satisfied.

**Date Comment Received**

4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1149

**Last Name** Farrell

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** I just simply want to state that the land that is being looked at by the Marines is one of the last large OHV areas in the state. Look at your own map and compare it's size to all the others combined. OHV users are beng squeezed out of all areas of Ca. Myself, my family and many friends rely on these areas for our recreational needs. We have holiday traditions and yearly friendly get-togethers in Johnson Valley. We simply ask that you allow us to have what little space we are still allowed to use. My kids will thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1150

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Alternative #3: This option leaves Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. Rather, it states the Marine Corp would have to move the proposition to the East of their current boundaries. This would mean that the Government would need to de-designate wilderness area. Note this particular 'wilderness area' was used by General Patton to train military before it was designated as wilderness. The other Alternative de-designates OHV areas that are being used by Americans for recreation, living, income and more. this is the best one thank sam

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1151

**Last Name** HOBBS

**First Name** MIKE

**Comment** I say "no action" on the part of the Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1152

**Last Name** Carlisle

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** With the war in Iraq winding down and the war in Afghanistan scheduled for troop withdrawal there is no need to do this. Many of us could no longer enjoy the desert. Flying to various places on the Colorado River and points east would become more difficult

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 1153

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I realize the Marines need a training ground to prepare our troops and hope a compromise can be found so the recreational community can share the land. There is a decreasing amount of opportunities for us to take our families out and enjoy nature the way it was created. I hope this doesn't fall on blind eyes and is read to deaf ears. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1154

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I vote for Alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1155

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am voting for the United States Marines to move their excersises to the east. Johnson Valley has been an off-road paradise for many years. There are generations of families their. Taking it away from the community would have a "HUGE" impact on the off-road community. This could lead to businesses shutting down because of the revenue these enthusiest bring during the weekends or special holidays. It would cause people to off-road illegally. It may cause people to go elsewhere, which would cost them money. Please take consideration in our requests. Thank you and god bless.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding

has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1156

**Last Name** Helliwell

**First Name** William

**Comment** Hang glider and paraglider pilots frequently fly around the existing controlled airspace at 29 Palms. Just last summer I flew from San Diego and landed at Pioneer Town, at the southern edge of the proposed Johnson Valley MOA/ATCAA. With just one more thermal I would have continued north for a few miles then northeasterly towards Lucerne. Many pilots have followed that path in the past and that path goes through the proposed airspace. If the lower boundary of the airspace was set at a few thousand feet agl that would allow these flights in the future. There is flying site a few miles northeast of Joshua Tree. This site is not in the current airspace, but is in the Proposed Sundance MOA/ATCAA. Typically hang glider pilots just fly the site, meaning they just go a few miles back and forth along a ridge and land below where they take off. So horizontal space is not an issue. However pilots do get as much as 3000 feet agl. If the lower limit of the airspace was set at 4000 feet agl then there would not be any problems.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 1157

**Last Name** Ryan

**First Name** Christina

**Comment** If we the riders have NO place set aside to ride.... Where will we ride? Ive lived in 29 Palms my 31 years of life.... Enough is enough, they have already taken the few places we do have to ride away.... Im worried if they take JV away there will be more kids riding in city limits and causing more problems for all the locals... Give us a place to go camping with our kids and let them ride....

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1158

**Last Name** James

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** If at all possible please find alternative land to train on instead of taking the Johnson Valley OHV land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1159

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have grown up in the desert, attending races and for the last few years racing myself. Johnson Valley is about 5 hours from my home and I make the trip fairly regularly, because the majority of our land isn't open for OHV use. The closing of Johnson Valley would not only affect us as an offroad community, but also the surrounding towns and business.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1160

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a fan of offroad vehicles, and using them for recreational purposes. I also fully support our troops, for without them we would not have these freedoms and liberties. I have plenty of friends who feel the same way. But the land that we are able to use to legally go wheelin' in with families and friends is slowly diminishing. We should try and hold on to what little we have left, because there is truly not much. I hope to work my way up to the park to enjoy it in the future. I wish the proposal would be reconsidered to a nearby location but not the park itself. Thank you for your time, Sean

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1161

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I deeply appreciate the mission of the USMC and know as well as anyone the importance that training provides to its members, I believe that keeping Johnson Valley OHV Area open for public recreation is also vital. This area is used weekly by hundreds of OHV enthusiasts, including Marines, soldiers, sailors, airmen, law enforcement personnel, fire fighters, etc. Thousands of acres of previously open OHV lands have already been shut to the public. Shutting Johnson Valley would have significant negative impact on both the local economies (Lucerne Valley, Victorville, Hesperia and other high-desert communities) and of the OHV-dependent businesses in all of Southern California, Nevada and Arizona.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1162

**Last Name** Kiernan

**First Name** John

**Comment** Save Johnson valley. There is no reason they can not expand in the other direction. I personally have been down range in 29 palms many times. Fort Irwin as well. Our government has spent billions of dallars on Iraq and Afghan towns in Fort Irwin so why don't they just train there. There is nothing to the east of 29palms no the expansion in that direction makes more sense.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1163

**Last Name** Steinberger

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Rather than fighting hundreds of thousands of recreationalists who use the Johnson Valley, why not fight Senator Feinstein to de list the Sheep Hole Wilderness area of 174,800 acres?

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1164

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a recreational jeeper and 4-wheel drive enthusiast, my concern for the Johnson valley ohv park closing down is taken seriously. In the past few years the offroad community has seen many ohv parks close down due to many reasons. In order to keep people on land meant to be wheeled and not trespassing, these parks need to stay open. I hope whatever land is chosen, it is not johnson valley so the 4x4 community can continue to enjoy a truely awesome park.

**Date Comment Received** 4/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1165

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Our hang gliding cross country club flies from the north side of Big Bear heading Northeast regularly during the summer months. Our NE route skirts the NW corner of R-2501N with the goal of flying into Nevada. We use the airspace over proposed R-XXXX very often. Alternative 3 uses airspace very few use. Taking land and airspace the citizens rightly use while other less intrusive options exist amounts to nothing less then theft.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 1166

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley OHV area open for recreational use. After all, it DOES belong to the taxpayers who use it, and pay your salary!

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training

requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1167

**Last Name** Yakel

**First Name** Joseph

**Comment** I your quest to expend for training purposes I would ask you to take into consideration the impact offroad recreation and motor sports in the Johnson Valley area. This was directly effect not only the users off the valley and trails but a large amount of meduim and small businesses as well. This area is one of very few that has such large change in terrain, making it one of a kind for the Ultra 4 racing. This is the largest growing racing series in motor sports. I have friends that go out yearly and sometimes quarterly to the area. In 2012, I will be out as part of a pit crew member for one of the teams. Please take the people who use the area into account when making your decision. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson

Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID**

1168

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

29 Palms base is currently home to the largest military training area in the nation (and the largest US base in the world), and consequently, the largest training program. The program known as Mojave Viper has become the model of pre- Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment training. The majority of units in the Marine Corps undergo a month at Mojave Viper before deploying to Iraq or a mixed training venue using the Mountain Warfare Training Center for Afghanistan. Live fire exercises, artillery, tank, and close air support training are used for training, in addition to the sprawling "Combat Town," a 2-acre (8,100 m<sup>2</sup>) fabricated Middle Eastern village, complete with a mosque, native role- players, an "IED Alley," and other immersive touches. Since the USMC already has 46,000 acres at The Mountain Warfare Training Center (MWTC) installation located in Pickel Meadows in California already providing the training needs. 100's of thousands acres of California land are already used as military bases & about 50% of California land is owned by government agencies. More California land should be returned to the public & not taken away. As a former US Army soldier myself who when threw pre deployment training at Fort Polk, LA. I believe that this Land Acquisition put forth isn't needed. As most of the operation overseas have been done by Platoon size to company size elements. In Afghanistan the need for tanks or TOW ITAS missile's hasn't even been allowed to be used or needed! Because there is mostly just AK-47's, PKM's, mortars & landmines. I see this Land Acquisition as a publicity stunt, as a former soldier I served to defend the right to have the freedom to Off-road among everything else. Now Off-roading provides me a way to cope from what I had experienced while serving stateside & overseas. While a lot of the Off-road community here in So Cal are former military, in the military or have son & daughters that are serving now. For the freedom we have to be able to enjoy this land we have sacrificed for. Johnson Valley (AKA The Hammers), Most visitors tour the area in four-wheel drive vehicles. The area near Anderson and Soggy Dry Lakes is used extensively for competitive racing events and OHV free play. There are numerous opportunities for hiking, rock hounding, and wildlife watching. The eastern boundary is shared with the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Air-Ground Combat Center. Johnson Valley offers a riding opportunity for every skill level. The South east portion of the riding area offers a large mass of hills known to rock crawlers world wide as the

“Hammers.” This area is for experts and has gained the attention of off-roaders in recent years through an event called “King of the Hammers”. People come from all over the world to enjoy the Hammers, please don't allow politics to destroy are public land and freedom. "SAVE THE HAMMERS"

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1169
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	<p>I am opposed to the expansion of the Marine Corps training base into Johnson Valley. My family (Navy/Marine Corps Veterans by the way) has been recreating in Johnson Valley for decades. I grew up riding motorcycles and exploring in 4WD's there and I have been raising my own kids doing the same. As Off Highway enthusiasts, we have already lost so much land in which to enjoy our pastime that we will never get back. Our way of life, passed down from one generation to another is in danger of becoming extinct. I am a huge supporter of the U.S. Marine Corps however I do believe an alternate expansion plan is in order here. JV is too precious a resource to those who recreate there.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/16/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).</p>
<b>Comment ID</b>	1170
<b>Last Name</b>	Hall
<b>First Name</b>	Eric
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Please do not shut out private citizens from year round access to the Johnson Valley off road park.</p>

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1171

**Last Name** Henr

**First Name** Todd

**Comment** Please do the right thing. It will mean revamping original plans but I think you'll find if you weigh all of your options you'll find this one to be the most viable and least intrusive.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1172

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The KOH race in Johnson Valley is the biggest of it's kind in the world and this area is home to some of the most challenging trails and amazing vistas to be seen. Destroying this landscape for military purposes would be devastating. We (OHV users)need this area to help keep our sport alive and the sport's contributions to the economy. Please keep public lands open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1173

**Last Name** Vandervoort

**First Name** Edward

**Comment** I have been Jeeping "off roading" for 40+years and have seen many many great off road parks shut or sized down. "we" need to have these places for people who love the "sport" of enjoying the out doors. Being able to take our vehicles, families and have full access to what is already established OHV park (Johnson Valley) and please leave it alone. We do this because we love this sport and to take our families on vacation, camping, exploring, general love of freedom of the outdoors. Every-time a group will step in and attempt to block or limit our "Pubic Lands For Public Use!" I am a taxpaying US citizen and I feel we have a right and say in what is happening here! If it's not the "Sierra Club" now it's the Military! We give to you (US Forces)our children to defend this great country. Now, can "Our great country give this small amount back?" Another thing my friend works for a contractor that goes in and clean up ammo from various military forts and it takes years and billions of taxpayer dollars to clean up after US forces tanning grounds. The military loosely leaves spent ammo that is much more hazardous and environmental is huge and takes years centuries to clean up. The impact of "OHV Park" is nothing compared to what the military does to the environment. The government has land elsewhere that will do the same if not a much better job at what (military) is using it for. Remember it was the Jeep WWII that was credited for helping win the WWII. In addition the equipment we run may be your next great fighting vehicle and we are putting these vehicles through the tests for you (at no cost) to the military. I ask you, is there anyone on this committee that loves this sport? If not, come out with us, have some fun and then you'll see why we fight for the use of land that is taken all the time from us by various groups. You (Military) have unlimited options for land use. We the Off Road individuals have vary little and then the Military wants to take even more. Please do more research, you have unlimited resources beyond

anyones belief and the(off road community)have very little and we want to keep what we have. This is like taking a playground from a little kid, or eliminating a sand box for a public park! Please all we ask is for from you "The Great Marines" is the best option in our favor. Just let us have it our way this time, you know the power you posses...all we are asking for is a break here one time.

Thank you for your time!

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one

of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1174
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson Valley has been a favorite riding and hiking spot for my family for many years. Please don't take that away! There is plenty of land that could be useful for this purpose north of Barstow.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/16/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p>

**Comment ID** 1175

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Regarding the expansion of the 29 Palms base, I am against any decision that would take any land from the current Johnson Valley OHV area. In speaking with a few of you this Wednesday night, you say there are more challenges in moving to the East, but in doing so, you will not be taking the recreational activities from hundreds of thousands of people. Should an expansion to the West be deemed necessary, we (OHV enthusiasts) would request that the military put in findings that an acre for acre mitigation plan is the only appropriate alternative for the OHV community. Lastly, in many of the maps currently being circulated, there is no representation of the courses motorcycles use for racing. We would like to have these added to the maps because it will graphically show just how much of the region we use on a week to week basis for our races. The attached courses are just examples. Each and every course is different, we do not use established trails on a week to week basis like the Hammers or the truck courses. Each individual club puts on an event of their own. These .pdf may not be good enough for you to upload and use, should you want to original GPS tracks, please let me know.

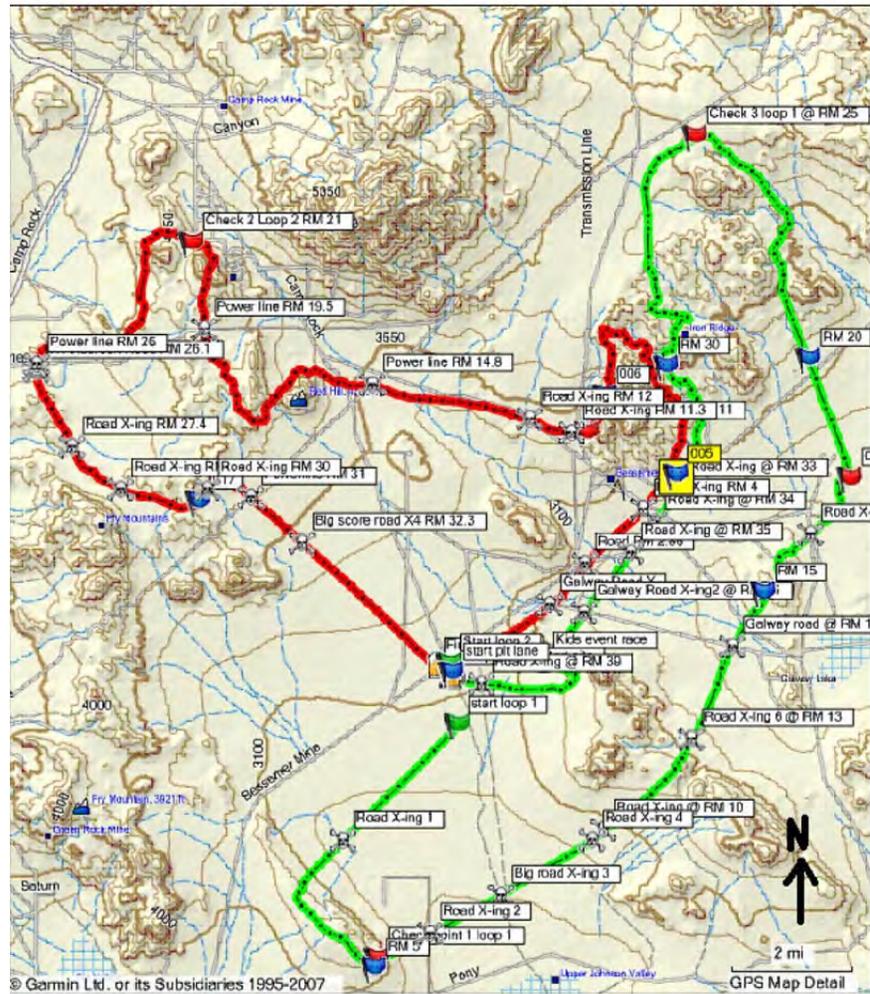
**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The Draft EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 1175 (Page 1 of 1)

Response to Comment 1175 (Page 1 of 1):



**Comment ID** 1176

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a very special place. I know people who have traveled not only from all over the United States, but from countries far abroad as well. It is imperative that in this economy we keep areas open that draw people into California and the USA. The OHV industry represents a large sector of the economy, not only for the vehicles themselves, but the ancillary items as well: fuel, food, camping supplies etc. With responsible use of state and federally provided open space dedicated specifically for off highway vehicle usage, we can ensure that this sport will continue to grow and provide a healthy future both for the environment and the people who enjoy it to the fullest. Thank you for your consideration and please, keep Johnson Valley open!

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1177

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Many years ago, public lands in California for off road use were plentiful, but through the years we have been steadily compressed into smaller and fewer areas. Johnson Valley is one of our last remaining areas and one of only three designated competition areas. This land has been used by off

roaders for three generations now and is a vacation and recreation spot for millions of Americans throughout the year. Go take land that is already not being used for anything else. Why deprive those of us who utilize this land every day of the year? 99% of all off roaders fully support our military and a large majority of us have been or are currently serving in the military and find this action treasonous and politically motivated. The enviroMENTAList are using the Marines like a puppet to further their agenda of making ALL motorized off road activities extinct. They hate you as much as they hate us, but cannot stop you, we are the easier target. So I urge you to NOT take away what little land we have left and take land that isn't being used for anything but 'show' please.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1178

**Last Name** schrecengost

**First Name** anthony

**Comment** I my self understand how important the u.s. military is and why they need more land but I think the best thing for all of us would be to expand eastward and not take our ohv areas away. As of now there are not many

ohv areas and I know the state doesn't want any illegal wheeling or riding but that gets harder and harder everytime our ohv areas are impacted. Also with all the people that head up to means lakebed for the big events and even just to wheel for the day help the economy from hwy 15 all the way to boone road by purchasing food, drinks, fuel, propane, etc. But if its taken away I think that would have a significant impact on the economy in those communities. Also, the whole wheeling communitie would be impacted because if there's no place 2 wheel then there's no reason to buy parts which will affect the economy all over the states. Lastly I've grown up riding and wheeling since I could remember and I've seen plenty ohv areas taken away and impacted from environment and military but as they keep disapearing I fear that one day I won't be able to share the experience of wheeling/riding with my children and grandchildren so I'm not saying don't expand the military testing area I'm just saying the best compromise would be to expand the base eastward so you still get your land and we get to keep our ohv area open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1179

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The public that likes to use public land as a recreation area should be considered when acquisition forces are at work.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1180

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It's getting so that those of us that have RV's are running out of space to commune with nature. If they've had this area all these yrs and haven't hurt anything, then why not? If area businesses are enjoying the business, then why not? There are other areas to practice, what's in it for them? Share mother nature!

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

1181

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I do support our Military and OUR Troops, but as American citizen I'm finding more & more of my rights being taken away from myself and other Americans, this is public land for all to use, I do not support this expansion at this time, Please re-consider any decision that would take this ohv area away from it's citizens. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1182

**Last Name** burns

**First Name** john

**Comment** I am aganist this land take over,there are other areas that are not ohv areas.This land is used by thousands of families,for recreational use,and would not help the economy if the marines close this land to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1183

**Last Name** barbarino

**First Name** vincent

**Comment** While at the meeting in Victorville i talked wit some people from the Marine base and they told me that one of the problems with alternative 3 was that Amboy road would have to be closed. Why not use that road as part of the training and build some bridges across it that will support the military vehicles? Disruption to traffic on Amboy would be minimized. That would be like killing 2 birds with one stone. The private property that is in the area could be purchased at market value and adversely affect way less people than moving into Johnson Valley. They also told me that there were gas pipelines and railroad tracks that would cause problems with training. Wouldn't these types of things be realistic problems that you would have to deal with in a real military action somewhere? It seems that these obstacles SHOULD be incorporated into a military exercise. You could also make Alt. 3 larger by de-listing part of the Sheephole Wilderness area as mentioned in the letter from San Bernardino County First District Supervisor, Brad Mitzelfelt. Using alternative 3 will negatively affect less Americans than alternative 6.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1184

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I want to vote for Alternative #3 leaving the johnson valley ohv area pen to the public. Alternative #3: This option leaves Johnson Valley OHV area untouched. Rather, it states the Marine Corp would have to move the proposition to the East of their current boundaries. This would mean that the Government would need to de-designate wilderness area. Note this particular 'wilderness area' was used by General Patton to train military before it was designated as wilderness. The other Alternative de-designates

OHV areas that are being used by Americans for recreation, living, income and more. The following are "comments" for Alternative #3: (reasons to expand to the East by 200,000 acres) - No impact to OHV opportunities in Johnson Valley - More compatible areas with the proposed action - Less impact to local business owners - Less impact to recreational opportunities - Less populated - The area has already been used by the military in the past - Economy will be less affected Reasons against expansion to the West - Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities - Reduction in area for the film industry - Negative impact on the economy - May impact public health and safety of surrounding communities - May affect Southern California Edison (SCE) electric transmission facilities and/or distribution facilities - May promote illegal riding - Potential impact on groundwater supplies and quality - Potential impact on biological resources (e.g., desert tortoise and prairie falcon) Keep in mind that the King of the Hammers event draws over 30,000 for their one week event and the total comments received during the first comment period was less than 20,000 IT'S TIME TO BE HEARD IF YOU WANT TO DRIVE & CAMP IN JOHNSON VALLEY WITH YOUR KIDS /GRANDKIDS.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1185

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to see option 3 of the proposed land acquisition and airspace establishment be passed. As I love my country and do agree that our marines do need land to train, I also believe we should leave land alone for the citizens who live free in this great country. I myself race, camp, and truly enjoy time with my family and friends spent in Johnson valley. We are working people who pay taxes, obey laws and respect the land and nature. Our government spends our money on so many things in other countries. When are the voices of the people of this very land going to be heard? We use this area respectfully as a place to see our children smile and laugh as they spend time outdoors. Imagine that, children outdoors now days! We spend money on food, gas, and many other things before we

head to this desert area, therefore moving money into the economy. I hope another way can be found to preserve what little land we have left to enjoy. Thousands and thousands of people use the proposed land every year. Not just the racing community, but huge groups of campers, dirt bike riders and desert enthusiasts alike. Again, I want to stress that I support our U.S. military and respect their sacrifice, but do also believe that taxpaying, law abiding American citizens should have a voice in the taking of our land that we enjoy to relax in after working hard and paying bills. There must be an amicable solution here to employ. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1186

**Last Name** barbarino

**First Name** vincent

**Comment** It has come to my attention that the Sheephole/ Cadiz (WSA 305) wilderness area was never recommended for wilderness in the first place because that area had been impacted by military training during WWII. It was mistakenly included in the wilderness plan.? We need to get that area de-listed and use it for training on the east side of the base. Also doesn't the military have the ability to request a "right of way" in the "Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness" area? Can you also request that right of way and use it for training also?

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1187

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am retired Navy so I understand the need for space for training. We the people are paying the bills for the military as well as the rest of the country. We off roaders have a limited amount of area we are allowed to use in the first place. The military can take land where ever they want, let us "We The People" keep this OHV recreational area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other

alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1188

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley has been a off road Mecca for many years. It is the perfect getaway for families, friends, off-roaders. Most of us in the world of off-roading have been and always will be conscientous to maintaining the trails and areas that we use. Johnson Valley has been one of the best areas we have to enjoy our recreation events. The military does not need to turn this area into another military exercise area. We want to keep this area open to the public for the enjoyment of everyone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1189

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have grown up in the high desert and my family and I use the OHV areas for recreation and racing. Over my 32 years of life I have watched the government take more and more desert land away. If you take the Johnson Valley OHV area, we will almost be squeezed out of the desert. The other OHV areas will become more crowded and create dangerous situations from overcrowding. I also believe that more and more people will begin to recreate on protected lands creating problems for protected animals. If you take Johnson Valley you must open up another area. I believe taking Johnson Valley is the worst thing you could do.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1190

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The financial burden on the off-road community will be felt in the surrounding communities. Johnson Valley is my family and friends favorite place to recreate. If this is taken away there will be many physical and emotional damages. This sort of action would put serious doubts about our government in the minds of many people. I strongly urge that this action not take place. Save the money and pay down the debt.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1191

**Last Name** Solms

**First Name** Carl

**Comment** The military should not require the entire population of Lucern Valley to be subjected to this takeover of public and private lands. There are other places where this type of activity can be conducted without causing any adverse conditions. Leave Lucerne Valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action,

including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1192
<b>Last Name</b>	Solms
<b>First Name</b>	Marjorie
<b>Comment</b>	What idiot thought that Lucern Valley would be a good place to train using live ammunition. This type of military installation belongs in an area with very scarce population and certainly not in an area so close to a major residential and business area. Has the noise factor been taken into consideration of planes and live fire. Tell the military to look elsewhere, they are not wanted in Lucern Valley.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/16/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because

they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1193
<b>Last Name</b>	Solms
<b>First Name</b>	Mark
<b>Comment</b>	I'm opposed to the taking of the public land in the Johnson Valley. This area is a major recreational area that also contributes to the income of cities and business's in all the surrounding areas. If this land if taken so the public can not freely travel and enjoy the recreation activities they have in the past this will force everyone to the Barstow desert area. This will create a unsafe situation due to overcrowding. The public has no other options but the Marines do so please leave Johnson Valley untouched or no worse than option #3. Thank you
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/16/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1194
<b>Last Name</b>	Gamble
<b>First Name</b>	Kevin
<b>Comment</b>	<p>To Whom It May Concern: I would like to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the propose acquisition of portions of Johnson Valley by 29 Palms Marine Corps Base. Bottom line up front: I prefer Alternative 3 as a primary choice, or No Action as a secondary choice. My reasons for this follow three main points; (1) Recreation Areas for Military Personnel, (2) Availability of Joint Military Training Areas, and (3) Difficulty of Range Clearance for some proposed Alternatives. In addition to frequently using the Johnson Valley OHV area for recreation, I am also a Navy Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Officer stationed in California. 1. Recreation Areas for Military Personnel. As stated, I am an active duty military officer stationed in California. My NUMBER ONE reason for seeking a duty station in the state of California is the availability of unique recreation areas. I am a veteran of multiple combat tours. The need for areas that are available for OHV recreation is very important to me. I am willing to perform any duty asked of me by my service, but I also expect the opportunity to relax and recreate when I have</p>

the luxury to be near home. I use Johnson Valley OHV area as a place to bond with my family and with fellow active and veteran military members. Removing these areas of Johnson Valley from public use would be not only remove a treasured recreation area for the general public, it will remove a recreation area from many military members as well. 2. Availability of Joint Military Training Areas I do not believe the DEIS has adequately explained why existing training areas at other bases are not adequate or available. For example, there are training areas at Ft. Irwin, NAWS China Lake, and many in Nevada that could be used by the Marine Corps. 3. Difficulty of Range Clearance As an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Officer, I know that the ability to clear an area for public use where live ordnance is used will be impossible for the alternatives that propose dual use. For example, Alternative 6 proposes that areas will be available for public use 10 months out of the year, and that the areas will be used for training the remaining 2 months. If realistic training is conducted with live ordnance being used, the USMC will not be able to clear this land as safe for public use. Such a clearance will be prohibited by the time, cost, and liability of declaring the area clear. It simply cannot be done to the level required to make safe for the public without extreme cost of contracting to a private ordnance company, or by tasking military EOD personnel who are already tasked too thin by current wartime obligations. Respectfully submitted, Kevin Gamble San Diego, CA

**Date Comment Received** 4/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which

includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1195
<b>Last Name</b>	Smart
<b>First Name</b>	Linda
<b>Comment</b>	Have been riding in the desert for 45 years. Am life member of AMA (American Motorcycle Association) and Prospectors MC Club. I have raced, trail rode and vacationed in the desert with club, friends and family. I have paid off- road license fees for the last 25 years and in return, open riding areas have been closed forever forcing the racing and riding population into small, worn-out, dangerous areas. Please vote to keep the few remaining areas open to off-road use. The closure of any off-road areas now will impact the frail economic and financial gain that is currently happening due to the use of off-road vehicles and their needs.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/16/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID**

1196

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I use the lucerne desert as an area to ride and race.I pay green sticker fees to be able to and also land use fees when I race (which is quite often)I would really hate to see this area or any other desert that may be open for me to ride/race on taken away or closed at any time during the year.

**Date Comment Received**

4/17/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

**Comment ID** 1197

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep me informed on any new information, my homestead butts up to the south portion of the expansion in 29 Palms. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Your name and contact information has been added to the project mailing list.

**Comment ID** 1198

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There are alternative areas for he Marines to train. The Marine Corps should use this area to set a positive influence upon the public. Keep in mind that the King of the Hammers event draws over 30,000 for their one week event and the total comments received during the first comment period was less than 20,000. I don't want to loose this area for the enjoyment of generations to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1199

**Last Name** Ockert

**First Name** Todd

**Comment** I fully understand the Marines intentions for wanting to expand their training area. As a retired military member, I fully support our military and any training that they require. I do not support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley area though, as I firmly believe that the military has sufficient military training areas in the Southern California area, to include, 29 Palms, Fort Irwin to the North of 29 Palms. Fort Irwin just completed an expansion of land that they took from the public lands of the Mojave desert. I understand that the lands to the East of 29 Palms is also suitable for the increased training area, and as this land is already wilderness area, it has no problem with people using it currently. Johnson Valley and the trails of this area are a national treasure that we in the recreation world treasure very much. The lands around the Johnson Valley area are currently multiuse and we would very much like for them to continue to remain as such. If the Marines need help in acquiring the lands to the east of the current training area, I know you would have the full support of those in the off-highway recreation world. Thanks Todd Ockert

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1200

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** this is horrible, the organization sworn to uphold our freedom and independence taking it away.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1201

**Last Name** Thomas

**First Name** Edwin

**Comment** Please read attached PDF

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 1201 (Page 1 of 1)



**U.S. Marine Corps  
29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
Environmental Impact Statement**

**Public Meeting Comment Form**

Comments must be postmarked or received by May 26, 2011 for consideration in the Final EIS. Comments may be submitted at the public meetings, via the project website at [www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las) or by U.S. Postal Service to the address below.

LOCATION: Victorville, Ca. DATE: 4/14/2011

MY COMMENT IS ABOUT (you may mark an "X" to all that apply):

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aesthetic/Visual resources | <input type="checkbox"/> Environmental justice      | <input type="checkbox"/> Public services          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Air quality                | <input type="checkbox"/> Hazardous materials/wastes | <input type="checkbox"/> Recreation               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Airspace/Air traffic       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Land use        | <input type="checkbox"/> Socioeconomics           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Biological resources       | <input type="checkbox"/> Mining/Minerals            | <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural resources         | <input type="checkbox"/> Noise                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Utilities/Infrastructure |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Energy development         | <input type="checkbox"/> Public health and safety   | <input type="checkbox"/> Water resources          |
|   | <input type="checkbox"/> Public lands withdrawal    | <input type="checkbox"/> Other                    |

The Johnson Valley OHV area is the source of affordable recreation for thousands of families every weekend all year round. With the high, and rising, cost of fuel, Johnson Valley is the only affordable destination for 75% of these families. Again we use the land year round. The military, Marines, plan to use the land two or three weeks a year and keep it closed year round, (except for staging areas along Camp Rock) I can't see how this is, in any way, a reasonable plan. There is wilderness, no trees and no more endangered wildlife than in Johnson valley, that can be opened up for two week, long, exercises, once a year. The Marines say that after the exercises that they are going to clean up and restore the area to pristine condition. This sounds perfect for the unused areas, East of Twenty Nine Palms.

\*\*\*Please Print\*\*\*

- NAME: Edwin L Thomas ethomas440@aol.com
- ORGANIZATION (if applicable) AMA District 37 So Cal M/C
- ADDRESS: 13312 Rancho Rd, Ste 18-114  
Oak Hills, Ca. 92344

Do you wish to withhold your name or address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)?  No  Yes

Please hand this form in or mail before May 26, 2011 to:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
[www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las](http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las)

**Response to Comment 1201 (Page 1 of 1):**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1202

**Last Name** Gill

**First Name** Dustin

**Comment** In this new land aquisition you will be taking away PUBLIC lands for military training. OHV areas in southern california are already shrinking enough as it is, I believe that this new aquisition will be the end of southern california ohv use. The real problem is this will create much more illegal off roading, which in turn causes more and more uproar. These areas are used by the public for R&D on off road capable vehicles that the military uses. without the public use of these areas, the military's progression in off road vehicles will slow rapidly. Please expand to the east of the base in land that has no ohv use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1203

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I am an avid 4-wheel enthusiast, and even though i live far from Johnson Valley, I beg the powers that be, not take this very valuable and highly coveted reasource from the public! The use of public land, for the public, and especially for recreation purposes, is constantly under fire these days. I beleive public lands should STAY PUBLIC! Johnson Valley is an iconic 4-wheeling mecha which I have never been able to enjoy, but really hope I can someday! Please do not take this dream from me, and many others! Surely, there must be other options, with less value to the public, that could be and should be considered for training grounds!

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1204
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Please do not shut down Johnson Valley. I have never been there, but I've heard about it, and would like to visit one day. The off-road parks in America are slowly being shut down, leaving off-road enthusiasts without a place to go. Don't let this happen to Johnson Valley.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/17/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>
<b>Comment ID</b>	1205
<b>Last Name</b>	Tetzlaff
<b>First Name</b>	Jared
<b>Comment</b>	I am the President of a non-profit organization dedicated to assisting those in the off-road racing community. I am also a racer/crew member and volunteer. Please consider option 3, 4, or 5 in that order as you look at the expansion of the training are for your base. The off-road racing industry is a multi-million dollar industry which provides a huge economic impact to not only California, but the surrounding states in the Southwest United States as well. Races draw participants and spectators from all over the world, providing much needed tourism dollars to the areas where races are held. Restricting one of the few remaining competition areas in California will

hurt this industry and the positive impact it has on the economy. I'm a huge supporter of our military and their ability to train and fight to protect our freedoms and have several family members who are or have served. I ask as a tax-payer, that the expansion considers the abilities of our US citizens to continue using the limited public land available for racing. Respectfully, Jared Tetzlaff President [www.fast-aid.org](http://www.fast-aid.org)

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1206

**Last Name** Winters

**First Name** Corey

**Comment** Hello, I am a Lance Corporal in the United States Marine Corp, I am writing today regarding the land annex issue for the land surrounding 29

palms and the newly purposed training area. There is a small section of the land, known as "The Hammers". This is a very unique area that has an ever growing world wide reputation for being some of the most difficult terrain to travel in very special purpose built 4 wheel drive vehicles. As an avoid off road enthusiast who did not get bless with a West coast duty station, I long for the days that would allow me to visit the area's surrounding twenty-nine palms for recreational purposes, and not as an infantry Marine going through CAX training. I ask that you please consider one of the other options to leave the land accessible to the tourists and offroad crowds, and thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1207

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a resident of Pennsylvania it may seem odd that I should be concerned with matters in Johnson Valley. However,as an offroad enthusiast I can not think of one single act that could possibly do more harm to our sport, then the loss of Johnson valley. I am very grateful for all that the armed forces do for all Americans. It is their sacrifice that allows me the very freedom to voice my opinion here. I completely understand our military's need for training, and that some public land will need to be allocated for that training. I hope that they might consider the desert areas surrounding Johnson Valley for the future location of their training facilities. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1208

**Last Name** Moss-Pultz

**First Name** Quinn

**Comment** I have been going to Johnson Valley for over a decade. It truly is one of a kind and there really isn't anything else like it. While I understand both sides, it would be a shame to lose such an amazing off road spot. As rock crawlers, we have limited terrain as it is. Johnson Valley is the center of our sport and to lose it would be a devastating blow.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1209

**Last Name** googer

**First Name** marc

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the public. So few places we have left for off road use, 4x4 trucks, ect.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1210
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	It would be a major blow to the offroad community to lose any land in the JV OHV area.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/17/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p>

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1211

**Last Name** Holmes

**First Name** Bill

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley as is, my family have been using the area for recreation for more than 43 years and it would be terrible to close or change the area. Thank you, Bill Holmes

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1212

**Last Name** Whittington

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** My family and I are avid off-highway enthusiasts. During the forty plus years that I have been enjoying the outdoors I have seen available space to recreate get more scarce with each new year. I strongly oppose any action to further eliminate access to off-highway recreation. This includes the Johnson Valley area, currently included in the proposal for expansion of the Twenty Nine Palms Marine base.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1213

**Last Name** Cary

**First Name** John

**Comment** As our population increases, there are more citizens using the outdoors. When we start limiting the areas we can use, more citizens will be compacted in the areas that remain open, thereby degrading those areas more. Our country was developed on a basis where there is equal opportunity and usage. Taking away land which has been used by citizens for years without consideration for their needs is not the American way. I think there are several other alternatives that will work just as good without impacting ordinary citizens.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

**Comment ID** 1214

**Last Name** Gagne

**First Name** Raymond

**Comment** Your western and southern expansion is a little too close for comfort to Lucerne Valley. I mean, you are coming right in to northeast Lucerne Valley. That is ridiculous that you should come so close to a community. Come on !!! There is quite a large rural community here and your expansion will have a negative economic impact on this area.....not to mention quality of life.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis

conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID**

1215

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

While I may be as far from Johnson Valley as one can be in the United States it is still important to me. It's a dream and a goal to test the machine I've built in an area created by god and nature to be the epitome of Off Highway action, a place unlike anywhere else. I'm very hopefully this area, and others like it in the West coast will be available to myself and my family, in particular my 2 daughters, who adore the rock crawling we partake in. While they may be to little to enjoy the hammers now, someday they won't be and I hope they'll be right there with me enjoying the thrill. I am pleased to see that the military is willing to listen and work with the Off road community on this and I truly hope an agreement is reached that makes everyone happy and provides an area to train our troops the the best of human abilities.

**Date Comment Received**

4/17/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1216

**Last Name** Sutherland

**First Name** Adam

**Comment** One of the most important and cherished parts of being an American is our freedom to pursue what makes us happy and that's not only in terms of recreation but financially as well. As of late, this guaranteed freedom seems to be quickly disappearing, taken by an ever growing government to meet its own needs. I understand the need of a strong military to protect our country and way of life however, it seems hypocritical to me when it's the military which every citizen pays literally thousands for each year is the entity that poses a threat to these guaranteed freedoms. Johnson valley is public land that has brought me much "happiness" over the years. My family and I regularly go out and spend vacation time bonding and enjoying ourselves while supporting the local economy. With so many other vast areas open in US deserts, it's hard for me to understand why this area would be taken, which is so important to many diverse groups of people and local communities. Please consider alternate areas besides Johnson Valley if the military needs to add to it's already massive accumulation of land and allow tax paying American citizens many of whom are veterans themselves to pursue their happiness on our public lands.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1217

**Last Name** Lorence

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** keep the hammers area open to public use thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1218

**Last Name** Cox

**First Name** Larry

**Comment** I wish to keep the desert open to the public for recreational use not military. Go do your testing in the ocean.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1219

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The only COA I support for Johnson Valley is COA #3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1220

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Utilizing the land for the public while offering the land used by Patton years ago seems a great win/win proposal. I hope the powers to be optimize the land so it is available for many generations to come. Thank you, A concerned citizen

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1221

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It's frustrating that more and more areas are being closed - even though more of the population is attempting to use public lands. Once an area is closed, they seem to never be reopened again. There is a significant amount of available and not controversial land north of Hungry Valley that can be used, and it just seems like it would be a better public response for the Marines to use non controversial areas, and leave popular RV, OHV and camping areas open to the public, and instead use other non popular areas for military exercises. Working for the US Gov, public perception, and public support are crucial - alienating the public, and taking away popular recreational areas will only serve to alienate the public, and undermine future support for necessary projects. I heartily recommend that you pursue other, less controversial areas.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1222

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take one of the best place for off-roading hiking, rock climbing.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1223

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I object to public access lands being closed and used exclusively by anyone. With 38 million people in the state of CA, we need as much public access land as possible. The Marines should use land (millions of acres fall into this category) already closed to the public. If the Marines should find no other alternative, than they should open up comparable closed land and make it publicly open. THIS SHOULD BE as it is on private property owners a 2:1 ration. for every acre of open land that is closed, it should be replaced with 2 acres of closed land made open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1224

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley OHV area is a one of a kind place and the premiere rock crawling destination in America. It is here that the sport is pushed to it's limits and continually being reinvented. Johnson Valley OHV area is far more than just open "BLM land" and should be excluded from this land acquisition.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1225

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I HAVE BEEN RIDING DIRT BIKES FOR OVER 30 YEARS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA. THAT IS THE REASON WE MOVED CLOSER TO JOHNSON VALLEY IN 1985. THE AREA WHERE THE D.E.I.S IS CONSIDERING CLOSING DOWN OUR PUBLIC LAND FOR THE MARINE TRAINING. IF THIS AREA IS CLOSED DOWN TO PUBLIC ACCESS AND FOR COMPETATIVE OFF-ROAD RACING THAT WOULD BE THE WORST THING TO HAPPEN TO THE PUBLIC THAT RECREATES ON THESE PUBLIC LANDS. THE CITIES THAT LEAD TO THIS AREA WILL LOSE A GREAT AMOUNT OF INCOME GENERATED BY THE OFF- ROAD COMMUNITY STOPING INTO THE BUISNESS'S ON THE WAY TO JOHNSON VALLEY TO PURCHASE FROM THESE ESTABLISHMENTS. NOT ONLY WILL THEY LOSE MONEY, BUT THE OTHER OPEN AREAS THAT WE USE TO OFF-ROAD IN, WILL BE OVERLLY CROWDED, THIS WILL THEN INFORCE THE BEAURER OF LAND MANAGEMENT TO SPEND MORE \$ TO INFORCE THE LAND ISSUE RULES IN THOSE AREAS. MAKING IT ILLEGAL TO RIDE IN JOHNSON VALLEY PER. THIS TRAINING FACILITY, THIS WILL CAUSE ALOT OF PEOPLE TO RIDE ILLEGALLY, MAYBE HARMING THEMSELVES OR OTHERS IN THE PROCESS. THE MILITARY HAS MANY OTHER OPTIONS OF LAND THEY COULD USE. PLEASE DO NOT TAKE AWAY OUR "PUBLIC RIGHT" TO USE OUR PUBLIC LANDS TO RECREATE IN. NOT ONLY WILL THIS BE A DOWNFALL OF ALREADY SMALL AND LESS SUCCESSFUL SMALL CITIES IN OUR SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA DESERTS, BUT THE OFF-ROAD INDUSTRY BUSINESS'S WILL TAKE A HUGE HIT WHEN PEOPLE ARE NOT ALLOWD TO USE OUR OPEN LANDS TO PLAY ON, BECAUSE THOSE OFF-ROADERS WILL NOT BE PURCHASING NEEDED EQUIPMENT,DAFETY TOOLS,AND OTHER GOODS NEEDED TO DO THIS SPORT SAFELY.WITH THE GAS PRICES OF TODAY, JOHNSON VALLEY IS THE CLOSEST AREA FOR MOST SOUTHER CALIFORNIA OPEN AREA TO OFF-ROAD IN. PLEASE COME TO A BETTER CONCLUSION FOR THIS TRAINING FACILITY. THE MILITARY ARE VERY WELL RESPECTED AND WE DO UNDERSTAND THE NEED TO TRAIN TO KEPP OUR COUNTRY SAFE, BUT PLEASE LOOK ELSEWHERE TO PROVIDE THIS TRAINING. THANK YOU

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1226

**Last Name** Doran

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** I object to public access lands being closed and used exclusively by anyone. With 38 million people in the state of CA, we need as much public access land as possible. The Marines should use land (millions of acres fall into this category) already closed to the public. If the Marines should find no

other alternative, than they should open up comparable closed land and make it publicly open. THIS SHOULD BE as it is on private property owners a 2:1 ratio. For every acre of open land that is closed, it should be replaced with 2 acres of closed land made open.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1227

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm a tax paying, law abiding citizen. My family has used Jhonson Valley for recreation for 4 decades. I want my children to have the same freedoms and liberties I have experinced here. I understand the protection of our nation is first and foremost. Please consider the marine training grounds elswere first with second opening previously closed land at a 2:1 ratio. Regards!

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1228

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I feel that the marines have plenty of other options for thier training exercises rather than taking away a great place for families to play and use tha desert as a playground.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1229

**Last Name** Krause

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I Prefer Alternative #3

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1230

**Last Name** Knowles

**First Name** Jared

**Comment** I spend about two weekends a month in Johnson Valley with my family, participating in recreational OHV riding as well as racing. Not only is this something valuable to me as an individual, having grown up riding the desert with my family, this has an economic impact on those communities around Johnson Valley. I spend a lot of time in Johnson Valley, enjoying my time with family and friends, and hope to be able to bring my children out there someday to experience the same, love for the desert and the OHV community. This land is valued the same for a lot of people that regularly visit and enjoy all the landscape and scenery it has to offer. It means a lot to us, as many have spent their entire lives, and raised their families in this lifestyle. Johnson Valley is where much of this takes place. As I mentioned, there's an impact outside the OHV community as well. The economic support that the OHV families bring to the surrounding communities is

substantial and steady. From my own routine, I spend hundreds of dollars a month in Apple Valley and surrounding towns. Compound that by the large number of OHV families making that same trek and spending, in a lot of cases more money in these same areas, and you have a significant source of income to these areas. Lastly, there is the issue that brings this entire situation around, and that is the Marines philosophy behind this land grab as an initiative to "train as we fight". What military engagements does the US military undertake now, or in the foreseeable future, that will involve "Three Battalion Task Forces abreast converging onto a MEB objective"? What enemy to the American people would be a candidate to confront the US military on such a scale? It's a shame that in California, where not only the cost of living has become so high, state regulation on business, emissions, taxes, and so on, has become so stringent and unforgiving, that on top of that, we must now also deal with the military attempting a land grab away from our recreational lands. Enough is enough, we don't need or want this expansion. The military has extravagant resources as it is now, and they should learn to use them efficiently. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 1231

**Last Name** Beyle

**First Name** Dennis

**Comment** Hello, My name is Dennis I am 39 years old. I have been off roading with my family since I was 5. My most fond memories growing up were out in the desert. Therefore, now that I have my own family of five, I want my kids to be able to create memories of there own. My family and I enjoy off roading at least twice a month. This enables my family to spend quality time together in a rather secluded atmosphere. My parents, sister and I are extremely close to this day thanks in part to the time we spent together when we were younger. I want the same for my own family. Due to the limited amount of off roading space within drivig distance, weekend getaways are becoming more and more difficult. The Johnson Valley OHV area remains one of our favorite spots due to the terrain and its relative proximity to our house (about a 2 hr. drive). It's vastness also prevents overcrowding which is why we discontinued trips to other areas, for safety reasons. I understand and support the need for training a strong military but,with all of the open desert in Riverside and San Bernardino County, wouldn't it be possible to aquire land for training futher to the East? Please reconsider other areas before you take away my families source of entertainment and togetherness. Thank you for taking the time to read my response. Dennis Beyle Son of two, Husband of one, Father of three & Friend of countless off roaders who share these veiws.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements

for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1232
<b>Last Name</b>	Lyon
<b>First Name</b>	Keith
<b>Comment</b>	Once again our government is flexing it's ability to take what ever they want and going the easist route. Why not take the WILDERNESS area that no one uses? Because that would take more work, so go for the soft target. The off roading community is large, but because not everyone is a member of some type of orginization they my seem smaller. On any given weekend the off road community actually USES there open lands for recreation, I thought that was what they are for! As for the shared use concept, how long will it be after this starts that it is deemed to dangerous for the public to use do to what ever you may come up with.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/18/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because

they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

**Comment ID**

1233

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I would like to state my opposition to the marine base expansion into Johnson Valley OHV area. The offroad, hiking, camping, bird watching, and other recreational communities that share this area may not enjoy their sport where they wish - it must be done on designated land. Taking this designated land away from us will create overuse in the few areas that we have left to ride in and hurt the communities surrounding Johnson Valley. By closing this area, you will be stealing the memories and past times of generations of families. Please preserve our PUBLIC land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

**Comment ID** 1234

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please save our public land and keep it open to the public for our recreational use. Everybody has their hobbies, just because you might not like ours does not mean you need to shut down our public access to the land SB

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1235

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** IT WOULD BE A SHAME TO LOOSE ONE MORE OFFROAD AREA IN THIS NATION. THE OFFROAD COMMUNITY IS SLOWLY BEING CHASED OUT OF MOST AREAS(CALIFORNIA ESPECIALY). I HAVE BEEN CAMPING SHARING THIS VALLEY WITH MY FAMILY FOR OVER 30 YEARS. IT HAS BROUGHT MANY HOURS OF RECREATION FOR MANY FAMILIES AND INCOME TO THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA. PLEASE DON'T SHUT DOWN THIS AMAZING AREA FOR RECREATION. THANK YOU SHANE CARNEY

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1236

**Last Name** Whittington

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Regarding the 29 Palms Marine Base expansion into the Johnson Valley area, I understand there are several options that are being considered. Option 3 appears to be the most benign however I have strong concerns that this option includes loopholes that will extend the timeframe for closure indefinitely. Therefore I oppose any option to expand the base in the direction currently targeted.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1237

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support the military in every way except this. My family and I have been camping and driving OHV for my whole life and I see our open land being closed and becoming smaller and smaller every year. I feel the military should look elsewhere and leave Johnson Valley open to the public. If the government continues to close more public land where do we take the next generation camping and off roading? Pretty soon there will be no open spaces all because of the greed of our monster government. LEAVE JOHNSON VALLEY OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening

criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1238

**Last Name** Whittington

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** I fully support our military but I do not support expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley. My family and I are avid off-highway recreation enthusiasts. Each year, we see more and more of our available space to pursue our interests taken away from us. This has to stop. I respectfully request all options that include base expansion to the West be removed from consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1239

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm concerned about the negative impact if you expand into Johnson Valley. It will affect more than just those who live there and use this area for recreation, it will affect many of us around the country who travel great distances to enjoy such beautiful recreation, such as myself. Short term it may be economical, but the long term negative impact on recreation far outweighs any short term benefit of using Johnson Valley. There is NO replacement for this area. You can't just take this beautiful recreational area elsewhere to enjoy. It only exists in Johnson Valley. Expansion here will alter and affect many lives around the country!

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4,5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1240

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, First off, I very much appreciate everything that our military and armed service men and women do for our country. Thank You for all of your sacrifices!!! I have been riding out in the Johnson Valley area forover 7 years now. Most recently was during this past "King of the Hammers" race where myself and 5 fellow riders recieved \$125.00 citations for being 1200 meters in the Marine base border, (that was not clearly marked by any fence or signage. the marines that stopped us could not even locate a sign). We were all taken back by this as we were in an area that we have ridden across many times and saw no signs posted saying otherwise. Apparently things have changed and are looking to change even more. The land acquisition suggested will not only imapct the local economy for Landers, Yucca Valley and surrounding cities and towns, it will also impact OHV green sticker sales, and offroad vehicle sales at dealerships in the state of CA, further restricting the growth that our state economy needs. 100's of jobs are created and sustained by OHV use in Johnson Valley. I make roughly 6-8 trips a year out there and spend close to 300.00 each time in fuel, food, and other items. Thats a minimum of \$1,800 dollars per year that I bring to the local economy...think about the overall imapct in loss of revenue & jobs. It will be in the millions...

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1241

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep this area open for public use. Me and my family have been going to the Lucerne vally for many years.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1242

**Last Name** Gilbert

**First Name** Bill

**Comment** Please, please, please do not close the Johnson Valley OHV area. My mother and father raised me in the desert on the weekends enjoying the beauty of the area. I now am raising my three children on the weekends in the area. It is important for them to be able to enjoy OUR open land and it is a benefit of being an American. Without these open space to recreate on we are resigning our children to stay at home and live on video games. The Armed forces enjoy the largest training facilities in the world, not to mention all the countries we now are occupying. It is ridiculous. Another government land grab is not the solution. Please do not take this land away from my children and their children.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine

Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1243

**Last Name** Geyer

**First Name** Matthew

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to OHV recreation. My family enjoys offroad recreation and there are very few places left to go. Also, closing Johnson Valley to OHV use will eliminate civilian sector jobs. Please select alternative 3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1244

**Last Name** Post

**First Name** Jamie

**Comment** I live in Apple Valley and work in Lucerne Valley. The entire High Desert area here benefits from these lands about to be confiscated by the government. In particular, Johnson Valley is one of few places of its kind open to the public and designated for off-road recreation not only in San Bernardino County, but in the world. I meet and talk with people who travel from Europe with German, Russian, and British accents just to take part in the racing activities of the area as well as enjoying a taste of the old back-country, wild-west style America and good ol' Route 66. The only reason the Military is stealing this land from the people and local communities and businesses that benefit from it is because the EPA wants all land that people are already not living on to be off-limits to everything and everyone. I have seen a map. There is plenty of room for base expansion in the OPPOSITE direction of populated communities and American citizens. I don't want bombs being dropped all over my backyard just because some environmental yahoo wants to trash MY neighborhood, MY community rather than some rat or coyote's vast vast VAST habitat. For some people, this land being stolen from us is their fun. To me, it is my livelihood. No soldier died to have land stolen from the people. This land belongs to the people. We send our sons and daughters to fight for this country, we pay our income taxes, we pay our business taxes and fees and permits and fines, we pay our property taxes, we pay our sales taxes, we pay our fuel taxes, WE FUND this government and its cronies like the EPA. WE DESERVE to have a voice and those Marines are fighting for a country in which the government respects us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live- fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1245

**Last Name** Post

**First Name** Jamie

**Comment** Don't Tread On Me. And stay off our land. My father was a Navy Veteran. He was in the Korean Conflict after the Second War. I remember him telling me about seeing nuclear bomb testing some miles away when he was stationed on Wake Island in Alaska. We all know about the testing that was done in the Mid West. Who knows? Maybe that's why he and SO many people are now dieing left and righth from cancer. We don't LIVE FIRE exercises and government theft of the people's land here in our beautiful desert communities (or anywhere near it for that matter). I believe I speak for a lot of people when I say, "BACK OFF!"

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with

the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1246

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley Alive for Riding!

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comments. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1247

**Last Name** Gildner

**First Name** Joseph

**Comment** I sincerely wish that the USMC would reconsider this land acquisition. It is going to have an enormous impact on the OHV community and families throughout Southern California. I appreciate the Armed Forces and all you do for us, but please try to find a way to share this great land. Thanks, Joe.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1248
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	The last "large scale" war was in 1991 and we will likely never see another. Training should reflect ACTUAL combat theatre. I am OPPOSED to the expansion of 29 Palms Marine Corp Base. Our current economic climate simply cannot afford this wastful and unneeded expansion.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/18/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.  As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the

Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1249

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The last "large scale" war was in 1991 and we will likely never see another. Training should reflect ACTUAL combat theatre. I am OPPOSED to the expansion of 29 Palms Marine Corp Base. Our current economic climate simply cannot afford this wastful and unneeded expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

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**Comment ID** 1250

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please, don't take away any more of our public lands! Our desert area for recreation keeps getting smaller and smaller. I love taking my family to the Johnson Valley Off Road area, we always stop spend money for fuel and supplies at the local stores in Apple Valley and Hesperia, and know the

impact of us, and many others, not spending our dollars, will hurt that local economy. Please, move it to east!

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response**

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1251

**Last Name** wilma

**First Name** kline

**Comment** For those of us who actually live in this area, most of us find the desert beautiful, peaceful, and serene. We love the off-roaders for the most part, they are usually only here on weekends and holidays and most are very respectful and clean up after themselves. A military base with live ammo and such would be an everyday intrusion on the desert and the creatures that live in it. I have seen the ugly scars left in the dry lakebeds from previous

military training and it makes me sad. I don't understand why this area is needed for expansion. I would like to see statistics and measurements from other bases backing up the claim that there isn't another base that would be sizable enough for their extensive training. It would definitely be a misuse of this tranquil area, in my humble opinion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response**

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live- fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1252

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley OHV open for camping and off roading as it is now. My family camps and uses the area year round. Thank you, Jeff

**Date Comment Received** 4/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comments. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1253

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am also a racer/crew member and volunteer. Please consider option 3, 4, or 5 in that order as you consider the expansion of your base. The off-road racing industry has a large economic impact to not only California, but the surrounding states in the Southwest United States as well. Restricting one of the few remaining competition areas in California will hurt this industry and the positive impact it has on the economy. I'm a huge supporter of our military and their ability to train and fight to protect our freedoms and have several family members who are or have served. I ask as a tax-payer, that the expansion considers the abilities of our US citizens to continue using the limited public land available for racing. Donald Bundy L&L Motorsports

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comments. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1254

**Last Name** Waltman

**First Name** Darrell

**Comment** The 29 Palms Marine Base is attempting to encroach on one of the Wests premire OHV areas,Johnson Valley OHV. I strongly disagree with the descision to add this land to their already massive training facillity. Why is it necessary to expand toward the population centers other than to create a SUPER military training ground which connects the Navy's China Lk. facility, Edwards AFB and Ft.Irwin/MCLB. I VOTE NO!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

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**Comment ID** 1255

**Last Name** peppel

**First Name** alan

**Comment** i know there needs to be training areas, but it seems the types of tactics nowadays are smaller and faster ...if the land use is only for short training periods , i think the use of ohv users far outweighs the training period... I have ridden in jv for 43 yrs and the use, economy support,etc is also of human importance...consider a land swap or a smaller grab,please...thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

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**Comment ID**

1256

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how

much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1257

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take over Johnson Valley and other desert that will close forever our public lands for OHV use. This is a major family recreational and professional racing events area and it would devastate the OHV usage in southern califonia. We already are losing land usage and have very limited areas to ride, race, play etc. This would not help. I do love and support our military but there has to be a better way than to take our public OHV area like this. Please do not take this away from us. Sincerely, Jason Coleman

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1258

**Last Name** Tate

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its

visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID**

1259

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought

much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1260

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that

are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1261

**Last Name** Radbourne

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open for us to ride/drive and play thank you!  
The Radbourne Famly

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1262

**Last Name** Granger

**First Name** Colin

**Comment** I STRONGLY OPPOSE the Johnson Valley Training Land Acquisition your organization proposing. The public lands of Johnson Valley in which my family and friends frequently use many times a year are a prosperous public and open place because of its terrain variety and range. I take my children there and the OHV area provides solid recreation for me and my growing children to enjoy. I have enjoyed Johnson Valley for over 22 years. There is no place else like Johnson Valley despite what other, and much smaller, riding areas may exist in the region. The major slice of what you're proposing to take and minor slice you're "letting" the public keep (the last proposal offered) does not offer a balanced solution. The best solution for

the public off-road and Lucerne Valley community is for the expansion to head east, ALTERNATIVE #3, and leave Johnson Valley in tact. The People and businesses of Lucerne Valley will greatly be affected by the loss of business, and employment, the off road community brings to the area if it is lost to the military. From an environmental standpoint, 3 brigades of rolling tanks and armored vehicles through the land will do harm to the wildlife and land than any group of off road riders. How can a tank brigade charging at 30 mph possibly see a desert tortoise inching along - it can't and is a false assumption that they will. Sincerely, Colin Granger

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1263

**Last Name** FISCH

**First Name** KURT

**Comment** I VOTE FOR OPTION 3

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1264

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am very disappointed to hear that the Johnson Valley area may be closed to off- road recreationists. I have spent many weekends in the area attending, and participating in, AMA District 37 events, and camping with my family. This is an area where our family gets together with others who share a love of desert racing/riding. Not only do we ride, but we explore the wide expanse of open areas. My children have learned about the animals, flora and fauna, and the previous inhabitants of the area, and have gained a better understanding of the Mojave Desert and have learned that without this great treasure, we would not have become such a close family that loves everything the Mojave Desert has to offer. I can only pray that the military will leave this area open to the public so that other families can experience what mine has. It would be a shame to lose this area when there are so many other areas that are already closed to public recreation that the military can, and should, use. The other issue that the military needs to address is the economic situation that towns like Lucerne Valley will face if Johnson Valley is closed. I have personally spent thousands of dollars in this small town during all my weekends of riding/racing in Johnson Valley, since this is the last place to buy gas and food. I have also made trips to Lucerne during my weeknds because I forgot something. If Johnson were to close, there is a good chance that Lucerne will soon follow. Please take into consideration the towns, people, and families, that will be effected by your

decision. There are other options, especially areas that are already closed to the public, that will suit your needs and still keep Johnson Valley, in its entirety, open to the public for off-road recreation, racing, camping, hiking, horse-back riding, and a plethora of other adventures for those that truly love the area. Thank you, Ann Chestnut

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1265

**Last Name** Rien

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Please keep this space open to our off-road community, Please look into other areas that will meet your needs for training. Please talk to us, work with us, we have several ideas that will benefit us all. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1266
<b>Last Name</b>	Stadel
<b>First Name</b>	Dennis
<b>Comment</b>	I am President of the Arizona ATV Riders. I represent 400,000 ATV owners in Arizona. We support Alternative #3 for Johnson Valley.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/19/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1267
<b>Last Name</b>	Westcott
<b>First Name</b>	Brandon

**Comment** Alternative #3 is the best option. Thank you, Brandon W.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1268

**Last Name** McGough

**First Name** Martin

**Comment** This land was used by my parents and is by me now and I want my children to have the opportunity to use it as well. Please leave it AS IS!

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 1269

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would love to be able to see the part of the US and explor with my family and our 4x4. It is on my list of places to go and it would be a bad thing if it was a restricted area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1270

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Marines do not need Johnson Valley. They need to train like they fight. We do not have large scale "Patton like" battles anymore. If you need to train like that then you can go over to Ft. Irwin. They need to train in urban environments.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by

members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1271

**Last Name** Gibson

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** Johnson Valley may seem like just another featureless typical desert area, but to many from throughout the U.S. and indeed beyond U.S. borders, it is a completely unique and beautiful area that is unlike any other. Families and recreationists from far and wide flock to enjoy Johnson Valley and the endless recreational activities it provides. Visit the area and you'll find its visitors have license plates from across the U.S. Talk with more visitors and you'll discover that many of them come from as far away as Australia and Europe, and they are here solely to enjoy what Johnson Valley offers. Johnson Valley is that unique. In fact, even many of the surrounding desert communities depend on those visitors for their very livelihoods and that if the visitors stopped coming, some of those communities simply may not even survive. Johnson Valley hosts many events throughout the year including one of the fastest growing and toughest off-road competitive events in North America called King of the Hammers. That event alone drew over 15,000 visitors including TV and radio coverage that brought much needed revenue to the surrounding communities. One of the largest groups of visitors includes the offroading community. Offroaders are completely supportive of the US military and especially our Marine Corps. We believe in the mission of the Marines and would do nothing to jeopardize the training that is so vital to the Marine Corps mission. With that in mind, we believe there is more than enough suitable terrain outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area, particularly inside the canyons, that simply cannot be duplicated anywhere else. To lose those valuable recreational resources that are, truly, so unique would be tragic to a huge number of families and recreationists. We believe few within the Marine Corps knew just how much Johnson Valley meant to so many and just how important of a national recreational resource that it has become. We believe that you do now understand its importance and because of that, we simply request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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**Comment ID** 1272

**Last Name** Tabush

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** As a lifelong Californian and former Hi-Desert resident for over 20 years I am dismayed at the prospect of shutting down the majority of Johnson Valley to recreation, especially off-road recreation. My family and I have recreated in the area since my father was stationed at the former George Air Force base in the '60's. The area must be kept open for recreation as it is if not expanded to its' former boundries. All of the proposals put forth are not only detrimental to recreation but also to the economy of the area, especially the City of Lucerne Valley. If the US Marine Corps needs to expand desert training activities I would humbly suggest partnering with the US Army to conduct training at the existing Fort Irwin facility. As a former employee of the facility I can tell you that there is more than ample oppertunities for training at Fort Irwin for members of the US Marine Corps and i believe that joint exercises may be mutually benifitial to all members of the Armed Forces. In closing- do not take away any public land from Johnson Valley. For the sake of the community, the residents, the economy, and those that recreate in the area please stop this massive land grab!

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1273

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider option #3 as it is the best option to insure public recreation and prevent an enormous impact to our already bad economy. Thank you for listening to my concerns. Daniel Ent

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1274
<b>Last Name</b>	Crites
<b>First Name</b>	Doug
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson Valley is a great place for family camping and riding. Shutting it down to public use is an absolute shame. The Marines absolutely need an area to hone their skills to protect us but they have been doing a great job for the 200 plus years with what land we have already given them. This is a travesty and will not be forgiven if this area is closed to public use.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/19/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p> <p>Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>
<b>Comment ID</b>	1275
<b>Last Name</b>	Wells
<b>First Name</b>	Jeff
<b>Comment</b>	JV OHV is land owned by the people of United States Of America.And they should have the final say,not the military .
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1276

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine base as we stand to lose our Johnson Valley OHV area. I have been off roading in the Johnson Valley OHV area since 1987 and as a 3rd generation off road enthusiast, and avid off road racer, I cannot support this move by the Marine Corps. The Johnson Valley OHV area is the biggest, and closest OHV area that we have near Los Angeles area. The economic impact that the town of Lucrene will suffer and the basic shut down of one of our largest off road areas will cause many racers, businesses, and manufacturers to go out of business. I vote NO on the Marine Expansion!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1277

**Last Name** Silcock

**First Name** Michele

**Comment** If you take this land from us, we will go out of bus. Also my club Monrovia Rock Hounds will not get to go out and look for rocks. I race for the cure of cancer, brain, and breast cancer, you see I have both, and racing is my life. Think about all the people that will lose their jobs. I love the U.S. and this just is not right, I know that we have to have the best in our men and women that keep us safe, but can we go some where else. It is a big world. I vote No.!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1278

**Last Name** higginbotham

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** Regarding the acquisition of the Johnson Valley. I feel very strongly again the acquisition of Johnson Valley. My family, friends and I use the area regularly and feel it would be a great loss to the people of California. As our access to other areas dwindles the loss of the Johnson Valley is just wrong. The people who have vowed to protect us are now going to try and restrict our own land. Please don't take Johnson Valley. If you have to expand then please consider proposal number six, the that goes to the east. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1279

**Last Name** Robertson

**First Name** Kathryn

**Comment** This is one of the best and only places left that is available to us to off road in the high desert. People come from all over the United States just to go to the Hammers. There are no trails that come close to the ones you can find in Johnson Valley and because of this it is a very popular place. Everyday more and more off roading trails are being closed. In the High Desert the designated place for off roading is Johnson Valley and now the Marine Corps and the Government want to take this away from us, U.S. Tax Paying

Citizens. Please Save Johnson Valley and leave our children with a great place to enjoy some Off Road Recreation. Don't let these Off Roding trails become a memory to us, and a dream of something that could of been for our children that they will never be able to experience.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1280

**Last Name** Hoover

**First Name** Charles

**Comment** To Whom it May Concern: I do not believe that the Marines do not need anymore land because you, "The Marines", are the best trained already. Not too many branches of the military can fight in the water, on the land, and in the air; and win. But you do just that. The Compromise: Close only land north of "the Hammers" and east of Bessemer Mine Road. Also, take the land east of the base toward the south. That will give you plenty more to train on. If that is not suitable for you, then you need to deploy your time and energy toward the east to the Wilderness Lands. You have the lawyer, the manpower, and taxpayers' money to make this happen. Thank you for your time, Charles Hoover

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1281
<b>Last Name</b>	Hoover
<b>First Name</b>	Charles
<b>Comment</b>	To Whom it May Concern: The more land that you close to the Public the more the surrounding communities will be hurt and dislike the "Base" as their neighbor. The towns rely on off-roaders for service to survive financially. We buy gas, have lunch and dinner, sometimes even ice cream, and on our unlucky days, we buy car parts, get towed, and see a mechanic. A lot of people will be financially hurt if we are forced to stop off-roading in the place that we have loved for over 35 years. Please expand the Base to the east or take No Action at all. A move to the east would allow the off-roaders enjoyment of their recreation and continue to support the neighboring communities. Thank you for your consideration, Charles Hoover
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1282

**Last Name** Debord

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I vote for Alternative #3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1283

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please don't take away one of the few places we have to enjoy with our families. Johnson Valley has been for some time our favorite place and also the closest to us to go to the desert. Racing is also a big part of our culture and we enjoy it as a family activity. My wife for the first time did a timed enduro and finished second, she had the biggest smile it was great to see. We've made also many friends and enjoy going to certain places on the way

there near the ridding places. Which I am sure will suffer economical impact once most of the off- roaders stop going. Thanks for listening, Allen (35), Nicole (36), Tyler (8) and Arianna (3) Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1284

**Last Name** Houston

**First Name** Ron

**Comment** I was born and raised in Big Bear Lake, I still come back to use the Johnson Valley area. There are not many places left like Johnson Valley and to move the base east makes more since. After all this is the public's land

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational

opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1285

**Last Name** Wood

**First Name** William

**Comment** I understand we have to train our military & thank God for everyone of them, but why do you need the Johnson Valley ? Seems to me you already have huge military bases in the Mojave area and if you need more space I suggest anywhere in the middle of Nevada. There's nothing out there for many many many square miles. Please leave the Johnson Valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1286

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** OUR FAMILY HAS BEEN ENJOYING AND RIDING IN THE JOHNSON VALLEY FOR OVER 40 YEARS. WE HOPE OUR GRAND CHILDREN AND GREAT GRAND CHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO DO THE SAME.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1287

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Closing Johnson Valley or severely hindering the public's ability to use the ohv area is unthinkable. While I support our military one hundred percent this land grab is not ok. We have the right to use our land and there are other areas that are not publicly accessible already that the military could expand into.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1288

**Last Name** Davignon

**First Name** Stephanie

**Comment** Taking all or part of Johnson Valley OHV area may be deadly! IF you take JV for 2 months of training, how will public safety be assured the other 10 months? How will unexploded ordnance be handled? What is the permit process and how realistic is it for organizations and individuals/families? What is the safety impact of relocating the tens of thousands of OHV families from JV to the surrounding OHV areas? What is the expected increase in accidents and deaths from increased population density in these surrounding OHV areas? What is the financial impact on Lucerne, Johnson Valley, Yucca Valley, surrounding areas when families and event organizers are forced out of the area? What is the financial impact to the state from lost revenues as event organizers and families travel to AZ and NV for OHV activities? IF the USMC expands into JV OHV area, how far in advance will a schedule be available showing closed periods? What is the procedure to change closed dates? Will the public have input into changing of closure periods? Who will be responsible for maintaining JV OHV area and where will the financial liability rest if used by the USMC two months out of the year? We have very limited OHV areas in our State. Please don't take the largest one around. The USMC has other options, we do not! If you need to expand, go East or North into non-OHV areas of open desert.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The Marine Corps understands the public’s concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM’s management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID**

1289

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I'm writing in response to the proposed closure of the Johnson Vally area. I feel this is not a good idea and will have negative impact on not only the local JV area but small businesses in so cal, and OHV safety in general. By closing this area down it limits the economic impact OHV usage put's into the local area. This closure and others are causing more and more families

to be confined to smaller areas and with more people in a small area it's not as safe and more accidents/injury's and possible deaths are going to happen due to this, we need more areas not less! Southern California is a hot bed for desert racing and because of this it has allowed several small home grown shops to be come large company's and provide much needed jobs for the community. It has also given alot of kids with no direction a place to focus there energy in a positive way to better not only themselves but others and the community around them. Please consider another options that leave JV open for OHV use. Chris

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1290
<b>Last Name</b>	Becker
<b>First Name</b>	John
<b>Comment</b>	<p>I am OPPOSED to any expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I recognize the need to train properly however the Johnson Valley area is one of the last remaining LARGE areas of desert that the OHV community still has available. OHV recreation is a FAMILY sport and one that provides a steady stream of income to the High Desert area and to Southern California in general. As a Veteran, I understand the need to train adequately. I suggest you look to the EAST,even if some roads need to be re-routed. That way the Marines can have a larger area and the OHV community can maintain what is one of the last great OHV areas in the west coast. Thank you for your consideration.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p> <p>Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the</p>

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1291

**Last Name** Weaver

**First Name** Ron

**Comment** Option #3 is my choice.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1292

**Last Name** Karnash

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** Go east Marines!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1293

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment** Please leave the johnson valley ORV area open to the public! Go east marines!

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1294

**Last Name** Bacon

**First Name** Jamie

**Comment** It's always been one of my dreams to attend King of the Hammers and to 4 wheel at Johnson Valley in general. Should the Marines expand to the West (as planned), this will jeopardize one of the greatest 4-wheeling destinations in the United States. Please, expand to the East and leave Johnson Valley OHV for those who truly appreciate it.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1295

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider expanding to the East rather than West in order to save the Johnson Valley OHV area. This area brings in some major events and year around tourism from all over the country. It would be a shame to lose such an area for an expansion that would be equally served by either section of land. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1296

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Love the USMC and have a number of friends and family who have served. Marines, please go east and not west! Thank you for your service.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1297

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I live in Apple Valley and regularly visit and enjoy the Johnson Valley OHV area. By regular I mean at least 12 weekends a year and approximately 8 day trips a year as well. I am a fervent supporter of our military and consider myself a patriot. However, it should be noted that I am strongly opposed to the proposed 29 Palms Marine base expansion to the west. I feel this area should be used by the American public for recreational purposes for generations to come. I would urge you to consider other options before you take our OHV area away from us. Thank You for your time and consideration in this matter. I also want to thank you for your service to our country. Be safe.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1298

**Last Name** Moles

**First Name** Dale

**Comment** Please look east marines, keep our public lands open to us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1299

**Last Name** Gehrum

**First Name** Kirby

**Comment** Please reconsider your acquisition of the Johnson Valley area for training grounds and use the land east of 29 Palms. I took a 10 day vacation out to Johnson valley this February of 2011, and plan to return on vacation next year. Johnson Valley is a valuable recreation area to the public, and this land acquisition would affect tens of thousands of people that regularly use the area. Kirby

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1300
<b>Last Name</b>	blanton
<b>First Name</b>	john
<b>Comment</b>	please expand east not west!! i make a living off of repairing and building rigs that go play in that area and i love going there i spend no less than a month each year out there!!!
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p> <p>Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

<b>Comment ID</b>	1301
<b>Last Name</b>	Schutt
<b>First Name</b>	Chris
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Johnson Valley is the absolute MECCA of offroading in the US, as well as the largest open area of OHV land available. Please move 29 Palm EAST! Johnson Valley is extremely important to so many, whether involved in Off Roothing or not. Closing all or part of Johnson Valley would have a significant negative impact on many businesses, and the off road industry as a whole. We want the Marines to be able to train first and foremost, but ask that you please move EAST, and allow us to keep Johnson Valley.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.</p> <p>The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p> <p>Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

**Comment ID** 1302

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Shawn

**Comment** To whom it may concern: I am a strong advocate of responsible off-highway vehicle recreation. I am also a strong proponent of the brave men and women who fight for our freedom at home and abroad. I feel like the proposal to expand the 29 Palms training area into the Johnson Valley OHV area is needlessly putting two of my biggest passions at odds with each other. I love being free, and I am grateful to the Marines (and other services) who keep my family speaking American English and saluting the American flag. One of those freedoms is outdoor recreation. The Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier off-highway vehicle recreation area for motorcycles, mountain bikes, trials bikes, desert racing, rockcrawling, ATV's, UTV's, and sand rails. There is no place in the country where I can meet friends from across our great nation and go play legally and ethically quite like Johnson Valley. JV's trails, scenery, and entire ecology is perfect for responsible OHV use. We have frequently been shut out of other recreation areas by the environmentalist movement. We'd hate to be shut out of our favorite area by our friends the Marines. We support you. Please support us. There is room to the east of 29 Palms. I will gladly support a proposal to expand there. Best regards, Shawn W. Baker Kalispell, MT

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with

the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1303

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am not in agreement with the marines proposal of taking this area of land, which is designated for the off-roading community. My family and I have enjoyed this area for many years. Please re-consider for my childrens future enjoyment.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1304

**Last Name** Skipworth

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** I dispatch for my racing team at MORE races and I drive in the Powder Puff race. Camping for these weekends provides a highlight in our lives and a quality time for our family to support each other. MORE officials are conscientious about safety and leaving the environment pristine. I am proud to be a member of this organization. Please do not allow the armed services

to take away one of the few locations we can have family time and destroy the natural environment!

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1305

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** A Hand full of people dictate how the masses pursue happiness. It is supposed to be just the oppisite. These invasions of citizens rights will someday lead to insurection & I think that is their wish.Martial Law-NO CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS- Also I might add-Hey all you immigrants that came from Mexico- Keep voting for these LIBERALS & you can turn this country into one like YOU FLED FROM-Just saying !

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1306

**Last Name** Swartz

**First Name** Sam

**Comment** Johnson valley is a great place to take my kids camping and riding, we have been going their for many years, if you take that land from us there is no where else for us to go. it is important for families to have a place like this for their kids. the military has done without this land for all these year, why do they need it now. their needs to be an option where it can be shared,

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1307

**Last Name** Ward

**First Name** John

**Comment** If you must expand you area of operation, please consider the land to the east to avoid any disruption to Johnson Valley. Thousands of Americans use that land for desert recreation every year for safe, family-oriented vacations. California is quickly running out of areas for legal off-road activities. In fact, Riverside County does not have a single authorized location for off-roading even though the state collects millions in gasoline tax every year dedicated to off-highway use. Environmental pressures have closed every off-road area in the county and a reduction in Johnson Valley acreage would be devastating. Please reconsider your proposed expansion and evaluate the potential to expand to the east.

Thank You!

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1308

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This town's businesses thrive on the weekenders and off roaders. If this goes through it will negatively impact the local businesses and economy of our town. At present there's enough military air traffic that passes through the area. We don't need anymore. At least twice a week, I get buzzed by military aircraft/choppers. The noise is a nuisance. This is not an acceptable area for use. A less populated one would be more appropriate.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1309

**Last Name** Collins

**First Name** Keith

**Comment** I am against any expansion. The military has more than enough land in the US west - probably more land than about half the countries on earth have. The people need their remaining public lands. I am adamantly opposed to expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1310

**Last Name** Hovland

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** Please reconsider taking over the Johnson Valley recreation are. My friends and family have used this area for off road activities since I was a kid and it would be a shame to lose access to said area. The desert has been getting smaller and smaller over the past years and there's virtually nowhere to go anymore. Taking away yet another recreation area seems so unnecessary while there is so many other options for the Marines in other portions of the desert. Possibly take over an area that isn't used frequently by so many.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1311

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I totally support the marines aquiring land to help in the training needed to keep our forces top notch and the best in the world. What I would like to see is the Marine aquire land to the east of them instead of Johnson Valley OHV area. We are already so limited in the areas

we can ride offroad and aquiring this area would limit us so much more. All I am asking is if it is possible, please aquire lands that are not open for the public to use already. Concerned wheeler and patriot, Jason Gray

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1312

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Save the desert for racing

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1313

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** EO3 Mckiben , having served my country for the right of freedom, i feel that closer of land that is currently accessible to the public goes against why i joined the Seabees/Navy , I do understand the need for more land so the the Marines may expand the training capabilities , but there are other options they need to consider. there few areas that offer landscapes and accessibility to the beauty this country has to offer. The public and the military need to work together, but the military's should never be at the expense of restricting access to open land the the public currently utilizes. signed EO3 Mckiben NMCB 5 served served proud 7 years.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1314

**Last Name** Faherty

**First Name** Travis

**Comment** I would like to ask you to move your operations to the east and not to the west. I am an avid 4 wheeler and to the west is a great place in the Lucerne Valley called the Hammers. This may sound trivial but finding land like this that is open to the public is getting harder to find.

**Date Comment Received** 4/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1315

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Theres no real need to expand the base. The base is huge as is and expanding it will take away a area the responsible parties take care of and enjoy as a recreation area. If the base does expand it will close the area as well as trash it because any one who has been out in the training areas on 29 Palms knows it's full of garbage.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1316

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** After being stationed on the east coast most of my career, I was estatic to get orders to 29 Palms. Most people would call me deranged, but "The Hammers" would be just 40 miles from driveway! No more would we make the 4+ hour drives to legally wheel on the east coast. All over the east public lands have been shut down, and we pay to sheel in private parks. THE BEST thing about 29 Palms is the proximity to Johnson Valley and good free OHV area. My family will be dissappointed to see this treasure absorbed by the Base! PLEASE GO EAST!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1317

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It is every American's birthright to use the national forests in multiple ways, including outdoor recreation in ALL its forms.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1318

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Although I have never been to Johnson Valley California I do plan to vacation there in my lifetime. I love four wheeling and Johnson Valley is the where the latest and greatest play. The King of the Hammers is the WORLDS greatest off road race. It has brought all aspects of four weeling together. New products, jobs, and companies have all been created for this event. For the Marines or any government branch to close it down would be a war against Americans. .GOV, havent you taken enough from the people?

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1319

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing in the hopes of persuading you to keep OHV trails open. I fall into a unique group of environmentalists that also enjoy driving OHV trails in my jeep. I believe there is a fine balance between preserving nature and enjoying it. Far too often we go to extremes and either bulldoze land or lock it up for no one to experience. While I admit not all people enjoy their OHV responsibly, the majority of people I have encountered respect the land and work to educate those that do not. Keeping legal trails open is the best way to encourage responsibility and discourages illegal off-roading. A few members of Congress recently participated in a fishing event designed to get children out and connect with nature. These members felt it was important to encourage children to get outdoors and "unplug" from the 5-8 average hours they spend daily in front of a tv or computer. Nathan Rott, of NPR, covered this story and said that "fishing is the outdoor world's equivalent of a gateway drug: Get a kid outside with a rod in hand and without knowing it, they become the conservationists of tomorrow". I feel the same way about off-roading. Thank you for your time and I hope you will take my thoughts into consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special

conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1320

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Expand East, not West. Leave the Johnson Valley OHV area alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1321

**Last Name** Knox

**First Name** Will

**Comment** As a former 29 Palms resident and Marine I think expanding East would be your best choice. Land use for OHV Areas is just as important as wilderness areas. Ever day we have to battle to keep our area's open and are loosing all places to legally ride. Will Knox

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1322

**Last Name** Patton

**First Name** John

**Comment**

I'm writing to show my disapproval of option 6. This option will deeply affect my family as we recreate 20 weekends a year in Johnson Valley OHV area. This is our family time, this is where I teach my kids camping, geology, botany, respect for nature. This is where we ride to the top of a hill turn our bikes off and listen to the sounds of nature, you can't do that in the city! This is where my kids climb on rocks and look for lizards. Please don't take our family's only getaway away from us!! I also disagree with option 6 because of the state of our state's economy. This option will make Lucerne Valley a ghost town. This option will put thousands of people in California out of work and close hundreds of businesses. California is the nation's leading off-road state, there are thousands of companies, dealerships, repair shops in the off-road industry here in California. Closing Johnson Valley will affect all of those families as well. Not only that, but I feel that closing Johnson Valley will affect our sensitive wildlife habitats that are currently closed to off-road riding. When the displaced thousands lose their only local riding area some of them will start riding on closed lands disrupting sensitive areas. Lucerne Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree, and 29 Palms residents will see increased illegal off-roading around their quiet neighborhoods so it will affect those families as well. Expanding the Marine Base to the west and closing Johnson Valley will affect thousands of families!!! Go east!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state,

or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1323

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Shawn

**Comment** I prefer Alternative 3. Alternative 6 may be the "Preferred" alternative by the Marine Corps, but Alternative 3 is win-win, and should be Preferred by everybody. Benefits of Alternative 3: No impact to Johnson Valley OHV recreation area, which is a benefit to the local and California economies. Less impact to local business owners in 29 Palms, Lander, Lucerne Valley, and Barstow, which is a benefit to the local economy. The Eastern alternative is less populated, so will provide less displacement and conflict to local residents. The area has already been used by the military in the past. While this is true of the western area, too, the western area has been developed and is in frequent use by American taxpayers. The eastern area remains somewhat of a "no man's land". Reasons against Alternative 6  
Reduction in area for off-road and outdoor recreational opportunities  
Reduction in area for the film industry  
Negative impact on the economy  
Potential impact public health and safety of surrounding communities  
Will promote illegal riding. Close Johnson Valley OHV area, and people \_will\_ be displaced. Ethical, legal, law-abiding riders will go somewhere else. Outlaws will be unwilling or unable to go somewhere else, and may continue to ride the area they were accustomed to--even if it's now part of a Marine Base. Please select Alternative 3 as the Preferred Alternative. Best regards, Shawn Baker Kalispell, MT

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

The Marine Corps understands the public’s concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM’s management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1324
<b>Last Name</b>	Michaud
<b>First Name</b>	Kriss
<b>Comment</b>	On top of everything else, how can we afford for them to pay for this? We've used the Johnson Valley for years as a family for our recreation and leisure. I can't express how much I and my family would miss the opportunity to relax in an area that can hold thousands of riders, yet large enough we are not on top of each other. I don't make hundreds of thousands of dollars, so I try to stay close to home when on vacation. This would push us into more crowded conditions staying local, or push us farther from home

costing us more each year to vacation. I feel the government has taken and taken enough, it's time to stop and stop it now.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1325

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Many would be greatly appreciative if the marines would not take over johnson valley. Please go east.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1326

**Last Name** Becher

**First Name** Janelle

**Comment** If you are going to expand the airforce base in Johnson Valley, please go East, and not West. There are many American families that enjoy the offroading oppurtunities that are offered in Johnson Valley. Please do not ruin this for us. Thanks, Janelle

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1327

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to the acquisition of this land for the use of the Marines. While I support what the Marines do, I also support the use of our deserts for family recreation. The off-road community is constantly losing area to recreate due to either environmental or developemental reasons. Our support of family off-road activity has a large economic impact on the economies of various desert communities through parts suppliers, restuarants, groceries and fuel. Please allow us to continue enjoying family time on our public lands and stop the closure and acquisition.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1328

**Last Name** Bush

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** There is NO reason this expansion should not move EAST, instead of into JV. The "Wilderness" area is no more wilderness than JV its self. The area would be losing serious income by removing public rights from the MECCA of off roading.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1329

**Last Name** Morrissey

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1330

**Last Name** Oden

**First Name** Kirk

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is an area that I have visited numerous times. Each time that I visit it I have stayed a local hotels in Barstow, purchased gas and groceries at local markets and eaten at area restaurants. Reducing or closing down this area not only will you be having a direct affect on a hobby that 100's of thousands of people enjoy but also affecting the local business owners and employees by significantly reducing the number of people that utilize their services. I implore you to not expand the 29 Palms training facility to the west and impact one of the most amazing OHV areas in the country.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1331

**Last Name** Ortega

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** My Family and I love Johnson Valley and don't want to have the Marines expand westward

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1332

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I've been going out to Lucerne Valley area since the 70's as a teenager riding dirt bikes. Since then I've aged and now 4 wheeling is my passion for the deserts I love so much. Although I am a "Marine Brat" and support them in many ways through fundraising, adoption of the 3/1 Battalion out of Pendleton by my city (my wife is on the 3/1 Board of Directors) and shaking hands of the young heroes I've had the honor of meeting through these events, there has to be a better way than to take a premier offroad area and to close it off for all time just to run war games a few times of the year. I understand the necessity of training and want the best for our young heroes and training is the best insurance for bringing them home alive. Multi-use is the way to go if the Marines "have to expand". I still think between China Lake, Fort Irwin and 29 Palms, there is plenty of opportunities for the Marines to do their war games on established huge parcels of land that are already closed off for all time.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening

criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1333

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** April 21, 2011 Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest Attn: 29Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, California 92132-5190 Dear Sir/Madam: As a long time resident of the Twentynine Palms area I am opposed to the proposed expansion of the MCAGCC. Notwithstanding MCAGCC's public relations statements declaring desire to be "good neighbors", adverse impact to rural residential areas from low overflights and explosive ordinance firing exercises at uncivil hours are already taking an increasing toll on residential quality of life. Given my direct experience with MCAGCC indifference to rural resident complaints regarding such concerns, I do not look forward to the realities of a post expansion environment in the base vicinity. Given that the base expansion will likely proceed regardless of any residential opposition, I would like to reiterate and endorse the following concerns as expressed by Mr. Phil Klasky's comments on behalf of Community ORV Watch as follows. Like Mr. Klasky, I am gravely concerned about the likely unintended consequences of base expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area. Should you decide to annex all or part of the Johnson Valley OHV area, it is my hope that you will see fit to adopt the recommendations set forth in his letter. Thank you for the opportunity to express my concerns, long time resident Twentynine Palms, Ca. Begin endorsed comments by Community ORV Watch: April 12, 2011 Dear Sir/Madam: The purpose of this letter is to offer our comments on the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Draft EIS. We are a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to defending our private and public lands from illegal and destructive off-road vehicle (ORV) abuse. Our members reside in the Morongo Basin including Johnson Valley and Wonder Valley. We suffer from widespread and consistent ORV trespass on our private property, public lands off-limits to ORVs, designated wilderness areas,

roads, berms and flood control infrastructure. ORVs are a major problem for law enforcement and code enforcement and produce excessive dust, noise and nuisance. We oppose any decision that will place our communities in harms way regarding illegal ORV activity. We are EXTREMELY CONCERNED that the base expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV recreational area will lead to an increase in illegal ORV incursions into our neighborhoods. In fact, ORV groups have warned that if any of their recreational opportunities are impacted, they will use the surrounding neighborhoods for their recreation. The loss of a significant portion of the Johnson Valley OHV area will result in adverse impacts including: o increased trespass and damage to private and public lands o increased destructio

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1334

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please go East Marines! Johnson Valley is the Mecca of four wheeling. Thanks for your consideration. Steve Lyon Denver, CO

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1335

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please choose another, more remote/less utilized location. There is very little ORV area for people to use in CA, without closing even more of it to our use. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1336

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an absolutely amazing place, and plays a huge role for the Jeep community, and people who enjoy nature in general. I'm only 18, but I appreciate what Johnson Valley is, love the pictures I see and I hope when I get out of college it is still open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1337

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We have enjoyed Johnson Valley for years. It would be a shame if our children and grandkids aren't able to enjoy it also. There must be another way to go!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1338

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm urging the marines not to expand their operations to the west into the Johnson Valley OHV area. As a Lucerne Valley resident and Johnson Valley user I feel the move west will hurt the fragile local economy by killing jobs, lower property values and eventually kill the town of Lucerne Valley which gets much business from the Off Highway community visiting the OHV area. As a local resident I'm concerned for elevated noise levels from military planes and live ordinance. The Johnson Valley OHV makes a perfect safe zone between the Marine base and the rural housing west of the OHV area. I have been to eastern edge of the OHV area and have seen bomb shells on the OHV side of the border. I would hate to see live ordinance dropped on Lucerne Valley residents. Again I urge the Marines to move to the east where there would be less intrusion on populated areas and no impact on the local economy.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordinance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order P35.004F SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every major exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range sweep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). If acquired lands were transferred back to public domain, the Marine Corps would be required to comply with range closure procedures (USEPA 40 CFR Part 300), Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Base Realignment and Closure Policies (BRAC), Reporting Hazardous Substance Activity When Selling or Transferring Federal Real Property (40 CFR Part 373), and Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) (10 USC 2701).

**Comment ID** 1339

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please reconsider expanding west into Johnson Valley as this area is highly regarded by OHV enthusiasts.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1340

**Last Name** barbarino

**First Name** vincent

**Comment** We play really well with each other and not very well with the other services That is what Capt. Nick Mannweiller said. How well are you going to work with us, John Q Public? Are the Marines really concerned about what we want or is this whole process just a Dog and Pony Show? If, for training, you need to a cretain distance why can't you do it in loops? We do it all the time for desert races when there is not enough room for one big loop. In fact the reason we have to do it in loops is that our open land keeps

getting smaller and smaller. Congress closes public land for wilderness, to save a bug or plant and now you want to close more designated land so you don't have to play well with your siblings. When is enough going to be enough? Before long all our liberties will be taken away. Then what will you be fighting for? You should learn how to play well with others, especially when you are playing on the same team. Mr. Proudfoot said that Fort Irwin does not do live fire environments. Well then start doing live fire environments at Fort Irwin or at Yuma. Use existing land at established bases and save the tax payer some money as well as letting the public recreate in Johnson Valley. Why is there not a "nonalternative action"? I am not convinced that the Marines have looked at all their options including playing in their own yard.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1341

**Last Name** Sawyer

**First Name** David

**Comment** Alternative #3 Please. There's no other place like Johnson Valley and the public needs it very much. Please expand to the east. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1342

**Last Name** Benz

**First Name** Jennifer

**Comment** As an active 4-wheeler and camper of the Johnson Valley Area, I am against the alternatives under the proposed Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Project that take away lands in the area known as Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley provides a wide variety of recreational opportunities for thousands of people. Taking away this land is unfair to the people for whom it brings so much joy. I understand that training is essential for a strong military and that certain land must be set aside to meet these training needs. This land, however, does not need to be taken away from people who actively use it already. Although training areas are needed, they should not be taken at the expense of the excitement provided by the Johnson Valley area. Many fun and exciting events are held at Johnson Valley, such as King of the Hammers, which attract several thousand people each year. Please respect and honor the requests to not take over the land that is so valuable to me and thousands of others.

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1343

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** my name is derrick i am from a small town in central Minnesota and a member of rockbottom4x4. wheeling is a way of life and a GREAT way to get free labor out of complete strangers! what i mean by this is my club is part tree huger, we love our trails and when we are not crawling through them we are maintain g, cleaning and loving them like our own. i personally have never been to the park in Cali that is under debate but i believe that every red blooded American should have a safe and fun ohv park of his own. closing this park would be sinful, enough said!

**Date Comment Received** 4/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1344

**Last Name** King

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** I am totally against the Marine Corps moving their training grounds into the Johnson Valley. My family has used this area for recreation for generations and do not want any military restrictions or involmnet in this area. This area has so many historical treasures in Johnson Valley and any resticted access would be robbing our citizens of the history and cultural wealth.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1345

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I started going out to the desert and riding quads and about 9 years ago after my Husband died suddenly. This activity was and has been a very peaceful and healing time for me. I have since spent a lot of time with my children and Grandchildren in the desert at Johnson Valley. We have been to other offroad riding areas but always return to Johnson Valley, because we enjoy the multitude of riding and the many number of families that are also out in this area riding and just spending quality family time. My question to you is if the Government chooses to take this area from the many families that use this area for many months out of the year what are you going to give us in return so that we may still enjoy the much needed family bonding time and riding in a safe enviroment?

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1346

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** you can go east of johnson valley and you should. just because its to hard on your equipment and personal and you cant perform well out there just means your afraid to test yourselves to your fullest. johnson valley has been the home to dessert racers for years and has a community built around family ohv not marine training. don't take are land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1347

**Last Name** Crookston

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** I STRONGLY urge either NO ACTION or Alt3. I believe in a strong military but any other option takes away valuable recreation area (Johnson Valley) that is already scarce. Extending the training area to the east will be less of a financial burden to the communities that support the Johnson Valley OHV area as well.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1348

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Go east Marines! Thank you for your service!

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1349

**Last Name** Postel

**First Name** Kel

**Comment** Please don't take away Johnson Valley OHV. I love racing motorcycles, and this is one of the few areas we have left to do our sport in California. Southern California's AMA District 37 is a mecca of Dirtbike racing, and is hosting a majority of the National Hare & Hound Associations races. One side of my family was a original member of the longest standing racing club of District 37, the Checkers. My other grand father was a Marine who lost his legs in WWII. That said... I'm sure Marines race bikes in the Johnson Valley OHV as well as the rest of us. Desert Racing is one of Americas most unique sports and it would be a shame for our greatest defenders to take one of the few areas left for us to race in. Thank you, Kel Postel

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1350

**Last Name** casper

**First Name** adam

**Comment** Please work with us The off road communittee to save johnson valley. We have co-existed forever. Lets continue. We are loosing all are land to ride. Please dont take this. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1351

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1352

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please keep the Johnson Valley OHV area open like it is now. I go there all the time from LA with my friends and family. It would break the kids' hearts if we couldn't go to their favorite place in the world. Can't the training facility go to the East? That seems to be a better solution for everyone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1353

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I OPPOSE ANY TAKING OF OHV LANDS CURRENTLY ENJOYED BY THE OFFROAD USERS IN THE JOHNSON VALLEY AREA. WE CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT DEVALUE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE PUBLIC GOOD DERIVED FROM FAMILY BASED WHOLESOME RACING AND TRAIL RIDING. MY TWO DAUGHTERS ARE THIRD GENERATION ENTHUIASTS THAT WILL HOPEFULLY BE ABLE TO SHARE THE POSITIVE AND HEALTHY BENEFITS OF ALL OFFROAD FORMS OF RECREATION. I HAVE OVER 195,000 DOLLARS INVESTED IN MY OFFROAD HOBBY.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1354

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Lucerne Valley (Johnson Valley) is where I go to get away from the city, and I do it often. I have been riding/racing out there for 10 years at least. Being in a club I have got to know the place really well. I love this desert and will be just in pain if it ever closes.. I hope there is a solution....

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1355

**Last Name** Burke

**First Name** Don

**Comment** I am an avid OHV area user. As such I much prefer the "no action" option.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1356

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Been riding/camping in the Johnson Valley area for 20 years with family/friends. If the Marines take/close that area it will be a crying shame. Not much freedom left in this country anymore. The best I could support would be would be to share the area but I do not believe the Marines will honor that kind of commitment.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1357

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As president of So Cal MC, I request that you not take any of land that we race and ride on in JV.I have been coming out to this area for 40 years with family and friends and would hate to see it gone. Thanks, Mike Arbogast

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1358

**Last Name** Barnett

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** You will be taking the only area to ride in that I care about. I've been coming here the majority of my life and it is the land I love. There are many other options for the marines to choose from. Please choose one of the others and leave Johnson Valley OHV alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1359

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** alt. map 3. We currently have such minimal land to camp, ride/race and raise our kids in a healthy enviroment, I hope we can keep this land open for public use. I don't want to see everyone grow-up connected to X-Box while texting indoors. Please keep Johnson Valley Open. Thank you S. Dorsey

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1360

**Last Name** Wyatt

**First Name** Terry

**Comment** My family and friends have been using the Johnson valley OHV area for four generations (my father, me, my son, and my grandsons) and it would be devastating to know that that area would no longer be available for OHV use. Please, no one uses the "wilderness" area to the East of the Marine Base. Use that area, not where hundreds of families recreate every weekend. Do not confiscate the OHV area. At the very most, use the #3 proposal

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1361
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	If you need more area, use Option 3. If this is just a land grab, Option 1 is my position. Just leave the OHV area of Johnson Valley alone and use other areas for your training. Phil
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/22/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1362
<b>Last Name</b>	Lombardo
<b>First Name</b>	Vince
<b>Comment</b>	The Johnson Valley area is one of the few off road recreational areas we have left within the massive LA populous. The off road community promotes closer family relationships.closer relationships with our kids. We love the Marines and what they do for us, but it seems to me that there is a massive amount of desert to the east that could be used and not affect family bonding and the local community of Lucerne Valley. This is just too close.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/22/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1363

**Last Name** BYRD

**First Name** ROBERT

**Comment** I AM A BIG SUPPORTER OF THE MARINES.MY CHURCH HAS SUPPORTED MARINE FAMLIES HERE IN THE FALLBROOK AREA. HOWEVER ALL OF US THINK THAT TAKING THE LITTLE REMAINING RV LAND AWAY FROM THE MOTOTCYCLE RACERS IN JOHNSON VALLEY IS FLAT WRONG.THIS LAND GRAB COULD BECOME THE RALLING CALL AGAINST THE MARINES FOR THE ANTIMALATARY PEOPLE FOR YEARS TO COME.THANK YOU FOR YOUR CONSIDERATION OF OUR THOUGHTS. BOB BYRD

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1364

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have enjoyed camping in the Johnson Valley area since 1966. Please do not change the access to camping and riding in this Valley so my children & grandchildren can enjoy the desert as much as I have. Thank-you

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1365

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Nils

**Comment** I would very clearly like to register my support for "no action" or alternative 3. I am an OHV user and so are my family and friends. As you must know, the land available for OHV use, specifically motorcycle riding and motorcycle racing, is and has been diminishing at a rapid rate over the past few decades. This trend is not fading away. If anything, it is accelerating. The Southern California high desert, specifically Johnson Valley, provides an opportunity for a very large population center (Southern California, Los Angeles, High Desert, etc) to come together and ride and recreate together. Beyond that, off-road racing is a great American tradition and with permitting, insurance, and general restrictions, racing will soon become extinct. This would be a blow to thousands of enthusiasts and their families. Closing Johnson Valley would eliminate one of the last areas where people can come together, enrich their lives, share stories, grow up, challenge themselves and learn skills that transfer into life in general. Please DO NOT ACQUIRE JOHNSON VALLEY THEREBY ELIMINATING OHV USE.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1366

**Last Name** RODriguez

**First Name** Alexander

**Comment** I feel Johnson Valley is one of the last places in Souther California where all sorts of outdoor admirers' of all sort can go to. From offroaders, camping, wild live spectators, even star gazers. Using the land will onle take away from public land and also destroy the Johnson Valley. That's why I vote for alternative # 3.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1367

**Last Name** Benjamin

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Option 1 and option 6 are both unacceptable options. They both effectively take away the Johnson Valley OHV with is vital to the offroad community and the surrounding communities financially. Limiting this area and reducing its space will cripple the entire OHV system in place. Areas left open within the Johnson Valley OHV and other OHV areas will become more overcrowded than they already are. This will lead to over use of the trails and also numerous additinal accidents leading to injury and possible fatalities just from the overcrowded conditionse Option 3 is the best of options but if you need more land for training look to the options that would involve taking land from the east or north of the 29 palms base. Thank You, Jeff Benjamin

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1368

**Last Name** Mumford

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** No action would be preferred - as so much of public access is already gone. If the Marine Corp Base absolutely has to restrict use of more land, Alt 3 would be preferred where there would be less impact to the public as there is not as much open land/trails to the east of the Base.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1369

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Although I understand the need for additional training ground, I would request that the military not push into the existing Johnson Valley OHV land. There are other alternatives available that don't reduce the available land for OHV enthusiasts, many of which are families that use Johnson Valley. With the shrinking land made available for OHV, we do not want

to lose one of the best areas we have today, especially when there are viable alternatives available for your purposes. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1370

**Last Name** Brookover

**First Name** Tiffany

**Comment** My family owns 2 homes and land in the beautiful Johnson Valley for the past 35 years. We are out there every month, it is our home away from home. We've always dreamt of raising many generations in those homes. My grandparents, parents, myself & one day my children and my brother & sisters children. Johnson Valley brings families, friends and even complete strangers close together. You are out in the beautiful desert, no Starbucks, No fast food, No freeways... Just the beautiful open skies, open land and the unique creatures the desert presents. The love that the off road community has for Johnson Valley is undecipherable. My father for example, when he is out on a ride he stops to pick up any left over cans that someone threw out, he picks up garbage, cans, anything that doesn't belong there. When we were little we use to ask him why he was picking up trash. He always responded "Because this is your future, and when you grow up, you'll understand and thank me. God has created this desert for us, this is a hidden treasure, and made to be enjoyed and filled with memories, not filled with garbage." I think that statement alone truly sums up why we love, honor and cherish Johnson Valley so much. It is our home away from home, and we pray that no one takes that away from us. Thank you for your time. <3

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to

acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1371

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** First the greenies want to close our desert for environmental reasons like (turtles, flowers, brush). Now the marines want to close us out to (bomb, run tanks through, and shoot everything). This makes no sense. Why don't you go practice in Iraq, Afghanistan, or Libya? There is plenty of desert over there. The marines have gone this long without it why now? We use the desert for family outings and to enjoy hobbies with our kids... Move to a desert where we cant ride.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1372

**Last Name** Brookover

**First Name** Rosalinda

**Comment** We take good care of our desert. Its the cleanest desert in Southern California. The off road public, enjoy and respect our desert. We stay on the designated trails, take home our trash and fully respect and love the desert. For people like me who own a home in JV, I would be devastated if they took away our back yard. Please dont do it!

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1373

**Last Name** Ardito

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** The Johnson Valley is the largest public recreational area in California and is used by hundreds of thousands of recreationalists every year. Not only will this affect recreational OHV users, it will affect off road races, the District 37 races, King of the Hammers, and the community. Taking over this area will put a lot of people out of business, and a lot of people without jobs.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1374

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Save the valley and keep it clean it one of the last fun save offroading spots in so cal

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1375

**Last Name** paisley

**First Name** robert

**Comment** Please do not take the land West of the Twenty Nine Palms base. This is a valued recreational asset to Southern California. This makes no sense whatsoever as there is plenty of land to the East. Please use some common sense here!

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1376

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I spend multiple weekends a year enjoying this beautiful desert. We ride quads, drive cars, hike and camp throughout the year. Please reconsider any other plan besides taking our desert away from us Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1377

**Last Name** Whitman

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** please keep Johnson Valley open

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1378

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** During Spring 2011 the we would like the EIS to study an eastward expansion of the Marine base or we would like the EIS to study whether this expansion is actually needed!

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1379

**Last Name** bigney

**First Name** shawn

**Comment** with all the comments already all I would like to say is just go east and leave our park the way it is with the way this state is we are already so limited in open OHV land

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1380

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please leave what little OHV area we have left alone. Off roading has kept my family together since the 1960's and has quickly dwindled in size to almost nothing. As a retired US Marine I do know the value of training, especially now. However, there are many more options than to take what little area we have left. Our liberties are rapidly dwindling and it is shameful that our government continues to see fit to choose what is best for us. I was not a Marine and haven't worked my whole life in public service to just roll over and watch more of my freedoms wrenched from me. Good luck on your endeavor, but please leave this family oriented area alone. SEMPER FI

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1381

**Last Name** Byrd

**First Name** David

**Comment** I have been recreating with my family in Johnson Valley for over 40 years. Johnson Valley is the last of a long line of large racing areas in the west. It would be a real shame to lose an entire form of recreation for hundreds of thousands of future users of this area. Most people's lives are in need of some excitement, some communing with nature, something other than sitting in a cube all week and in front of the TV all weekend. Please don't take away the last large race area in the west. You will be condemning more people to golf. Real people need this area to make their lives whole. Sharing the area is silly, it will never work but you know that already. Please leave us alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1382

**Last Name** Moore

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** You do not need to acquire more land for training. China Lake has plenty of airspace to share with all branches of the military and has Cutty Back range which is only minutes away by air from Twenty-nine Palms. Your expansion will negatively affect business and recreation in the Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008.

Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1383
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Save Johnson Valley from military bombing
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/23/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1384
<b>Last Name</b>	Lampson
<b>First Name</b>	Al
<b>Comment</b>	Alternative #3 will have less impact on local businesses. It would also allow OHV users to maintain an outstanding recreation area. We are being pushed

off of OUR lands. Please consider moving to the east. This area was used in the past as a training area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1385

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Many offroad areas have closed with no replacement. Soon we will have nowhere left to legally enjoy offroading.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1386

**Last Name** Landfield

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** My friends and family not only enjoy Johnson Valley, but a certain amount of revenue is generated at our family's Ford dealership from off roaders as well. Please consider an alternative

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS,

there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1387

**Last Name** Gordon

**First Name** Garrett

**Comment** Trails are shutting down around the nation, don't let this one be added to that list. I would like to see this trail/ events stay around for years to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1388

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** With all due respect for the Marines needs, I wish there was another way to achieve their training other than through the acquisition of federal lands that where set aside for the public use. I have viewed the information on your web site and attended the public meeting at Ontario High School. The open areas left for the public to enjoy with there families and friends is all but gone now and the loss of the Johnson Valley area would be a great loss for Tens of thousands of people that utilize it. I can only hope that the acquisition can be avoided and that the Marines can find another way to solve there training needs. I believe the "small" area the Marines claim would be available for the public use part of the year will never happen due to liabilities. Please try to find another way to fulfill the training needs and leave the land for the public, like make a u-turn and go another direction.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1389

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** With all due respect for the Marines needs, I wish there was another way to achieve their training other than through the acquisition of federal lands that where set aside for the public use. I have viewed the information on your web site and attended the public meeting at Ontario High School. The open areas left for the public to enjoy with there families and friends is all but gone now and the loss of the Johnson Valley area would be a great loss for Tens of thousands of people that utilize it. I can only hope that the acquisition can be avoided and that the Marines can find another way to solve there training needs. I believe the "small" area the Marines claim would be available for the public use part of the year will never happen due to liabilities. Please try to find another way to fulfill the training needs and leave the land for the public, like make a u-turn and go another direction.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1390

**Last Name** Marks

**First Name** Melody

**Comment** I live in the area a little east of the proposed "south" expansion section in Wonder Valley. CURRENTLY the late night and early am practice bombings are disturbing sleep and causing property damage and it will only get worse if they move any closer. I have a cracked window and interior cracking - directly due to practice bombings. Do they plan on fixing the damage that occurs to people's homes? I'm disabled and can't afford to fix the damages caused by the bombings! There also should be some kind of curfew placed on how early and how late these bombings can take place - A noise ordinance like citizens have to abide by so they don't disturb the peace of people LIVING in the area. It's appalling that they don't take this into consideration! The noise from the helicopters is another problem when they fly too close or directly over homes. This is also very disturbing and shakes and rattles everything. I fear my home and others will be further damaged or destroyed if the plans for the South expansion area goes forward. Wonder Valley used to be a nice, peaceful place to live and now it feels like we're in the middle of a war zone already. Please consider there are PEOPLE living here!!! WE ARE AMERICANS and we should have the right to live here in our homes in peace and without fear of further damage to our homes and health! I appreciate what the military does, but it shouldn't be at the expense of their own citizens suffering. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1391

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** United States Marine Corps, As a Marine (92-97) I know first hand that it is a big priority to ensure civilian life here in the United States is preserved at all cost from foreign or domestic enemies. I also know first hand that the US armed forces in general take great strides to ensure indigenous civilian life in other countries is preserved. I ask the USMC to stop this senseless land grab knowing full well it adversely effects the civilian population of the United States by removing open freedoms that I and many others have fought hard for! Levae Johnson Valley OHV alone and open for the people of the United States. If the USMC needs additional room to train take it from usn-used land.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1392

**Last Name** Lemon

**First Name** Dallas

**Comment** Please consider option number 3 and allow Johnson Valey to remain open all year round. I enjoy that portion of California and even though I have only been to Johnson Valley a couple of times, my plans are to visit the area more frequently over the next several years and run the Jeep trails. I do stay in local hotels and dine at the local dining places. In other words, I contribute to the local economy. Now that I have sent my children through college, I have more money and time. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1393

**Last Name** Moser

**First Name** John

**Comment** As a Vietnam veteran, the question to expand the training range at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palm, California to accommodate training exercises for all elements of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade should illicit an affirmative response. We want the base to expand for modern and future requirements if needed. After all, we are patriotic Americans who love all our people in military service and we want the Marine Expeditionary Brigade to be the best trained in the world. In fact, so well trained that we could achieve the ultimate dream of them being deployed and returning home safely without casualties. The Johnson Valley OHV Area is the nearest OHV area for Morongo Basin residents (generally identified as the towns of Morongo Valley, Yucca Valley, Joshua Tree and Twentynine Palm). Morongo Basin residents spend between two to three hours traveling to and from the Johnson Valley OHV Area for off road recreation. Other OHV areas are an additional one to two hours away. The Department of the Navy's DEIS (Draft Environmental Impact Statement) Alternative 6 is not clear about the impact on the Johnson Valley OHV Area and continued public access to these lands. Johnson Valley OHV Area contains 140,000 acres of land. The DEIS does not address how many acres will be consumed by Alternative 6. They just throw the public a bone in making the statement: "The Alternative [6] would allow for reopening to public recreation use approximately 40,000 acres of the acquisition area for 10 months a year." Does this mean that you are taking the entire 140,000 acres, but allowing public access to only 40,000 acres? This will result in the loss of 100,000 acres of OHV area that we will never get back. If this is true, then this is a poor Alternative for the public and OHV users. I would opine that Alternative 3 is far superior in that it does not involve the removal of significant acreage from our nearest OHV area. It would appear that you could take desert lands to the east all the way to the Arizona boarder without affecting an OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see Table 2-3 of the EIS for summary information on action alternatives. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1394

**Last Name** McBurney

**First Name** Charles

**Comment** It is my wish that nothing changes in johnson valley ohv. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1395

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** Option 3 would be the best. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1396

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** There is already a shortage of legal land for OHV folks to use PLEASE don't take JV OHV area!

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1397

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Regarding the 29 palms expansion, Please expand east. I am the son of a Marine, and some day wish to become a Marine. But I am also an OHV enthusiast and wish to preserve the Johnson Valley land that is used by offroaders and any land used by us. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1398

**Last Name** mcclammy

**First Name** vince

**Comment** Keep the public land public! For the people not FROM the people.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1399

**Last Name** Kreidemaker

**First Name** Frank

**Comment** Voting for Alternative #3 on the matter of The Johnson Valley OHV area. Keep public land open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1400

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Three generations of the Lewis family have grown up using Johnson Valley. As is, too little riding area is open for competition use, and the currently increasing amount of desert closures is killing the sport of off-road racing. We all take care of our desert like it is our home and protect the wildlife with as much care as we can. It is even in our instructions that if we come across a desert tortoise that we get off of our bikes and safely move the tortoise in the direction it was going, off the trail. Military use in this area would greatly reduce the numbers of an already dwindling population of tortoise. I support and love my country, and look up to our men and women in uniform. They keep my current and future family safe, but all of the land that is currently used for the public should not be handed over for military use. Thousands of people each year use the area that you currently wish to take, and it would be a complete blow to our morale if the most beautiful place we know is taken from us. If this area is given over to the military, the sport will likely die. The smaller amount of useable riding areas would cause the trails to become too beat up and no one will wish to go out to the desert anymore. Please take into consideration all of the other people that use this area before the process of taking it over is pushed further.

**Date Comment Received** 4/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1401
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	This is a very important area for the OHV community.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/24/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1402
<b>Last Name</b>	peters
<b>First Name</b>	kevin
<b>Comment</b>	please keep JV from being taken from us offroad enthusiasts. there is literally no other geological place like that in the entire nation.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/24/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1403

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** we need to keep these trails open...if taken care of they can be great enjoyment for all to use...its a great time to keep the family together which is what this country is failing at right now...

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1404

**Last Name** Gibson

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I support the "NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE"! The Federal and State Governments have already taken away enough public lands from it's citizens to use for recreation and cultural activity. With the wars winding down in Iraq and Afganistan, the need for additional lands at 29-Palms is diminished. If the Marine Corps truly needs additional land for training, take it from the Mojave Desert Preserve, that will affect fewer people and cost the taxpayers less in land acquisitions, relocations, etc.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation

distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1405

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** If I must consider an alternative, it would be #3 any and all environmental effects would be further from more populated areas.. Noise, water and public lands pollution would have a lesser impact on the populated areas. As it is stated in your Geological statement the marine base would be required to stay on well defined roads unless training scenarios require otherwise.. Basically saying when they must they will destroy the land even more so that a group enjoying the secluded lands for hiking and riding instead of bombing everything..

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1406

**Last Name** DeJarnett

**First Name** Rick

**Comment** Please choose the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE for this land. Please leave this land open to all recreations and family activities. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1407

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please choose the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE and keep this land open and free to use for all U.S. citizens. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1408

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I suport the NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1409

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm hoping that the base acquisition doesn't go through. I moved from Connecticut to Southern California in 2007 for the specific reason of having access to vast, open riding areas like Johnson Valley. I always thought that age and physical health would be the limiting factor to where and how often I ride

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1410

**Last Name** Wright

**First Name** Jake

**Comment** Go East Marines! I have too many family memories in Johnson Valley that I wouldn't trade for anything. I hope that I will be able to share it with my kids in the future. I agree that Marines need training grounds, but hopefully there is a solution that allows for continued recreational use of Johnson valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1411

**Last Name** Pelphrey

**First Name** Cory

**Comment** Please Do Not take more of our Public use land. As a advocate who loves to go offroading this land being considered is one of the few areas we as offroaders have left. Please consider "NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE". This is the best alternative to this decision. I understand the need for Military

training but please consider using other land that is not as highly used for recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1412

**Last Name** Griffin

**First Name** Phillip

**Comment** No Action Alternative! Save the Johnson Valley OHV, do not let one of the last natural desert terrains open to public use get sucked out from underneath our feet!

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1413

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The "No Action" alternative for the 29 Palms base is the most appropriate. It is well known that a large percentage of the base is not currently used. Why should a very popular public recreation area be taken from the public when the base has so much area not used? This is nothing more than a land grab.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1414

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please take no action and leave Johnson valley open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 4/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1415

**Last Name** prutch

**First Name** nick

**Comment** go east marines

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1416

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1417

**Last Name** McElwain

**First Name** Kirk

**Comment** Regard the proposed expansion of the 29 Palms Airforce base:As a fixed income senior, I have used extensively the area of proposed expansion. Areas close to major population centers like this(LA, Riverside, San Bernadino) should remain open if at all possible for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1418

**Last Name** Spielberger

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** I have been visiting the johnson valley OHV area for the last 10 years driving thru the various terrain and enjoying the beautiful diverse landscape. I also attend the yearly SAR ride. My children have found this to be a great area offering hiking / climbing and OHV activities. I live by camp pendleton which is probably about 120,000 acres. is it really necessary to take over an additional 141,000 acres that is johnson valley OHV? i would welcome the discussion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1419

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The tree huggers, government and BLM have taken away all public lands for off road use and forced the off road community into designated off road areas. Now the designated off road areas are being threatened of closure. If the acquisition occurs, we will not get the small allocation of land returned. As an alternative, maybe another significant area of public land can be designated as an off road area in place of the Johnson Valley area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1420

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Hello I am writing in regards to the possible closure of our Lucerne Valley/ Bartsow areas and the affect it will have. There are several ways it will affect the off road community all of which are negative. I hope you will take all options into serious consideration as many people, families and companies will be deeply affected by the loss of this land. I have used the land myself for many years and had many great family memories from this area and I would hate to see it gone as so many other places have. I have enjoyed this land for camping, dirt biking, enjoying nature, family outings, racing, offroading and everytime I go there I have spent money with the local gas stations, food establishments and other stores. These stores depend

on OHV people out there and without them they may not make it. Please do not take the land as I believe the value is far more exceeded for OHV, Racing and offroad communities than it would be for training purposes.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1421

**Last Name** Creveling

**First Name** Jeremy

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Regarding the expansion of the 29 palms facility. Myself and my family are wholeheartedly in opposition to this expansion effort. I am currently an active duty service member and want to see my brothers in Arms be able to effectively train but not at the cost of my ever dwindling outdoor use areas. The Johnson Valley has a diverse audience that use this area that includes OHV use, OHV competition, rock climbing, prospecting, and wildlife observation. This expansion will adversely affect all of us including many marines and other service members who regularly use the Johnson Valley area as a recreation destination. If this expansion goes through it will directly impact our soldier's and sailor's moral and even incite questioning how our military feels about the public. We should be protecting the shrinking areas we are allowed to use. The only acceptable option is to find an expansion area that will not impact our OHV areas. I find concern in the dual use option which on the surface the Proposal that allows 189,470 usable acreage\_100% 10 months of the year appears to a valid compromise. Yet I see the public access to this acreage being severely curtailed by lengthy and laborious permitting that will become so unachievable that we will not be able to use our land. I strongly urge you to

find ways to ensure that the OHV community will be fully supported and not "tricked" into compromising under the pre tense of this is the only way our Marines can train. We as service mebers and public servants have an obligation to protect from all enemies both forgiem and domestic. Sincerely, Jeremy Creveling

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1422

**Last Name** watson

**First Name** yancy

**Comment** Hello, My name is Yancy Watson. I am a registered voter and I pay my taxes. I am a member of the AMA (\*Americian Motorcycle Association), District 37 organization and secretary for my Huntington Beach Motorcycle Club. I have been coming out to the desert and associated with the race scene for more than forty years. My family has done this since I was in diapers and now it's my turn to share this experience with my children and they are currently off-road enthusiast. I have paid into the 'Green-Sticker' program since the first I've purchased a motorcycle and had the Green Sticker Fund raided by by government representatives right before our eyes. Now the military wants to 'steal' a huge chunk of Johnson Valley OHV for training. I am a huge supporter of our troops, but I refuse to stand by and

just allow the military throw off-roaders off public land! In Yuma AZ, the military already owns 2.8 BILLION ACRES of open land that can be used for training... in what world is that not enough open area to perform military maneuvers? Please consider leaving the desert open to ALL off-road enthusiast... rock climbers, hikers, campers, 4x4ers, side-x-side, horse/cowboys, motorcycle racers, truck and buggy racers. If the government continues to close the desert, it will be a huge mistake and affect millions of everyday people and the company's that we support. Please reconsider the military California land grab and go where the military ALREADY HAS BILLIONS OF ACRES! Thank you for your time. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me. Sincerely, Yancy Watson

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1423

**Last Name** Pischke

**First Name** Rob

**Comment** My family and I have been going to Johnson Valley since the 1970's. I have seen it grow in popularity and dont want to see it taken away. Its a great way to spend time with the family and friends and spend time outdoors.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1424

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** How much desert do you need. I am a professional pilot and am quite knowledgeable about your operations and the airspace you guys already own. Basically you guys own the airspace around MCAS Yuma, 29 Palms, all the way north halfway up the Owens Valley towards Bishop. I have an idea! Since you guys are in the business of keeping our nation safe and sovereign, Why not have your excercises along our Southern Border. That way the Mexican drug cartels from San Diego all the way to the Gulf of Mexico might think twice about how they conduct thier operations. If they shoot at us, you can shoot back, you can then train your medics and MP's by arresting and giving medical aid to the illegal immigrants that we apprehend. There is also acre upon acre that you can use to play tanks and artillery. I'm sure that there are farmers down there that would appreciate the Marines invading thier lands as opposed to Thugs from the drug cartels that are killing farmers, local law enforcement, border patrol, and ICE agents. That way you can be trained up for such missions as patrolling the border lands along the Afghanistan-Pakistan Border. The BLM lands that you want to play tanks and airplanes on, are used by hard working civilians that help pay your salaries and buy your tools of the trade. If you understood all the time and effort that these people put into thier off road vehicles, you would also gain some benefits from thier efforts. Here is an example: Where does your light off road vehicle technology come from? Guys like these. You are always looking for good Marines aren't you? Building and working on these vehicles keep young people off the streets and out of trouble. Guess what, these young people are your future, since they can design, build, and repair the hardware you so depend on. I know that there was an accident that killed 8 people out there one night. Unfortunatly is was a case of ignorance turning into stupidity. We at M.O.R.E do evewrything we can to insure that everyone has fun and goes home safely. We are not the organization that had the accident. Now the BLM, along with both of our US Senators, seem to want to punish us for the inactions, and unwillingness of some other organization to follow BLM rules. Just remember, the military is around to kill people and break things.

These Senators want you guys to be thier "Meals on Wheels" program, and spread political correctness across this planet. God Bless the Marine Corp. For all you do to keep us safe.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1425

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not allow the military to shut down Johnson Valley and thereby prohibiting its public use for off-road vehicles. As an avid off-roader I and the members of the off-road club I belong to would hate to see another public land restricted from use. Another reason to keep areas like this open is that we get our children involved in off-road sports and hopefully keep them away from drugs etc.

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1426

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please consider alternative #3 and expand your areas into the east and save this awesome area for the ohv crowd, lots of people will be economically affected if you close this place down

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1427

**Last Name** graham

**First Name** jeremy

**Comment** please see my other post, missed the email list

**Date Comment Received** 4/25/2011

**Response** Noted.

**Comment ID** 1428

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Come on guy,s. Please use some common sense. Using Johnson / Lucerne Valley for training is not the right thing to do. You have 1000 of miles on the other side, towards Parker that used to be your training grounds. Patton trained his Tanks out on the other side. If it worked for him, it will work for you. Leave johnson Valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1429

**Last Name** Sillings

**First Name** Arlene

**Comment** The military has enough land for their training exercises at their disposal throughout California. The public land is quickly disappearing for the general public to use and enjoy for generations to come.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1430

**Last Name** Morrow

**First Name** Garrett

**Comment** please expand East. Thank you.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1431

**Last Name** mortensen

**First Name** wendell

**Comment** Please consider moving East to expand. Taking one of the few remaining off- road areas is not good for California.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1432

**Last Name** Murphy

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** I am an avid offroad and outdoor enthusiast. My family has been enjoying the Johnson Valley Offroad area for generations. This area is a way of life for me and my family. We have spent every holiday and spare moment from work there camping and and enjoying our public use land area for years. Loss of this would be absolutley devastating to my family and friends which use this area regualrly. With no legal riding area anywhere else close by in the california area this would cause substantial impact on the entire offroad community and our right to use our public lands. I also belong to a a ministerey group in my church which has used this area in our outreach to touch many lives through comon ground and love for our sport and our god. The loss of this god given land and righ to use this public area and allow us to bond as with our fellow offroaders would be irreplaceable for our community and our freedom. Offroading and camping in Johnson Valley has given me somthing to ook forward to and strive to do my entire life. Keeping me from getting in trouble as a kid and keeping me active in racing helped give me the drive, and skill to be succesful in life. I use these same values to help keep my children and family doing the right thing and participating in offroad racing, camping, recreational riding to keep every one involved, happy, and on the right path. I am very happy and proud to be

part of this great country where we have the freedom to enjoy the outdoors and do the things we do in Johnson Valley. And I am thankful for the Military for fighting to help keep these freedoms. I do feel that the 29 Palms base is already the largest base in our area and there is no need to take the OHV area that brings so much joy and much needed freedom to so many people away. If the training space is needed for the benefit of the military and there success there are plenty of other areas that are not used the public and will not impact so many thousands of families and off road enthusiasts.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1433

**Last Name** Kardos

**First Name** Robin

**Comment** We have been lucky enough to use this area for as long as I can remember I will be 30 in November just to give you an idea on how long my family has been using OHV areas and now I take my boys there..it would be devastating to me and my family if it was taken away please find another way..

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1434

**Last Name** bernocco

**First Name** eric

**Comment** Please consider other alternatives. These lands and spaces should be available for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1435

**Last Name** bernocco

**First Name** eric

**Comment** This area should remain open to general public use.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1436

**Last Name** Gordinier

**First Name** Riley

**Comment** Please expand to the north or east. When our vacation home in Homestead Valley (near Landers) was built around 1960 there were no booms from the base. Now we often are subjected to building-shaking booms. Any expansion to the west will increase the nuisance, and decrease the nearby area we use for outdoor recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the

proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1437

**Last Name** Jeffrey

**First Name** Devon

**Comment** Please keep this land open as it is how I make my living and enjoy desert outings with my family. I am a huge off road racer, rider, and hiker. I don't want to loose this land in my generation or my childerens. Please take out letters into consideration. Thank you Devon Jeffrey

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1438

**Last Name** Gordinier

**First Name** Riley

**Comment** I strongly favor Alternative 3 of the Draft EIR. I take Alternative 6 as a second choice, because it offers at least some access to the southern portion of the West Study Area. I would be most impacted by access closure and military activity in the southern tip of the West Study Area. I say this as a

landowner in Homestead Valley (west of Spy Mt.) who runs, hikes, climbs, drives and photographs for recreation in the southern west study area, north to a line roughly through the old Los Padres Mine. We have been increasingly affected by ordnance noise from the base, which shakes the house. Expansion to the west will increase the impact, particularly activity in the southern part of the west study area. It will also limit or prevent use of an area I can reach on foot, which is part of the enjoyment of the location of my vacation home.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time- averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1439

**Last Name** Bishop

**First Name** Steven

**Comment** The taking over of Johnson Valley SRVA by the U.S. Marines is a horrible idea. The areas that are disappearing for families to enjoy and utilize are now few and far between in the Southern CA area. If the self righteous environmental groups knew what exactly the military is and will do on these lands, they would put a stop to that as well. Let's put it to a vote instead of skirting the democratic way. DO NOT BE FOOLED BY THE GOVERNMENT.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1440

**Last Name** Paddack

**First Name** Leah

**Comment** I support the United States military services. I understand they need space to train. However, I do not think taking over the Johnson Valley recreation area is the best decision, especially when the base could expand to the east instead. Because this is the largest area in California for the use of off road vehicles, the Johnson Valley races draw a very large crowd of people to attend. Many of these people depend on the surrounding communities for supplies such as fuel, food, RV storage, and many other products. The communities in this area are small and the businesses depend on the traffic provided by the events held in the Johnson Valley. Taking away this land would not only take away one of the last remaining off road riding areas, but it would potentially devastate economically many of the surrounding communities - communities who are already struggling to stay afloat in an economic crisis. I must oppose the expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 4/26/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1441

**Last Name** Eckmann

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** That land in Lucern Valley is the United States Citizens. The military has enough of the land already. If they don't have enough land in California use the land in Arizona that is about 500,000 acres. That land we the tax payers have already paid for. Let us keep that land in Lucern for our kids and their kids to ride. We have paid for that land with our taxes and green/red sticker funds.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1442

**Last Name** Eckmann

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** The military has enough of our land in California already and 29 Palms has enough land. Talk to Marines that have been on the training grounds they have now and they have not seen the boundary line at 29 Palms. I have spoke to a few and they have been on one week training missions and have not seen it all. The Military has what 500,000 acres in Arizona for training isn't that enough of the taxer payers money at work. Wow the government wants to take over Lucern Valley some tough times in the United States. How much would us the tax payers have to pay just to put the fence around it. Lucern Valley is paid for by GREEN and RED sticker funds.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1443

**Last Name** Eckmann

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Lucern Valley is paid for by GREEN and RED sticker funds. The United States government is in debt already just think how much a fence would cost to put up around all that new area. I would love to bid on that contract. Lucern Valley is a great land use area for people all over the U.S. to come and enjoy. The Military has some 1,000,000 acres in Arizona for this

training already so keep using that area. I have spoken to some 29 Palms Marine vets that have been on week long missions in 29 Palms training area and they have not seen all the land out their so why do they need more land to destroy and kill animals , fossils, plants and other things.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1444

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** I am an avid off-raod enthusiest who has just begun to frequent this location within the last 3 years. I have two young sons who have just recently started riding dirt bikes and this has become our favorite camping/ riding area. I would hate to see this area closed down and I am not sure if we would be able to spend this quality time as a family together if we were unable to visit this beautiful riding area. I come from a military family myself and I am proud to support anything having to do with expanding and improving our military. However, I feel there are several other options of expansion and closing this riding area just does not seem to make a hole lot of sense.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1445

**Last Name** Bernal

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Some call off road a recreation, sport, hobby, a way of life and freedom and most would say all of the above and some. This place need's to remain open to the public...

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1446

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family & friends have been going to Johnson Valley & Couger Butes for Years (60+). Numerous races & other events take place there - every year - scheduled or not. I strongly suggest you go EAST - nobody goes out that way. It would solve numerous problems with hundreds of thousands of weekenders that frequent the west area. New thought - How about you take all the money & solders that practice killing. Stay in the USA & keep our borders safe for the citizens of this wonderful country. Take the extra money & help the homeless & raise the poverty level here - then worry about the rest of the world. HELP OURSELVES FIRST - THEN ANYONE ELSE WE CAN SECOND - IF ANYTHING IS LEFT. Maybe we could work towards peace instead of practicing death.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1447

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** In order to save the wilderness that me and my family use, please consider moving the Marines to the East. I enjoy Johnson Valley area throughout the wheeling season and wish for my kids to enjoy it as well. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1448

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take Johnson Valley from the public, allow the Marines to expand to the east. I have hundreds of friends that enjoy the desert and the area for it's wonderful trials.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1449

**Last Name** Fanning

**First Name** Blaine

**Comment** Johnson Valley is a one of a kind OHV recreation area that should be kept the way it is. If there are other alternatives that can provide the same outcome for the military I would urge that they go that route. Things to think about if this area is made off limits to the OHV recreation community are, economy, and the potential for illegal OHV use in this area.

**Date Comment Received** 4/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1450
<b>Last Name</b>	Anondson
<b>First Name</b>	Mark
<b>Comment</b>	As a lifelong (45+ years) offroad riding/racing enthusiast, I feel that I am qualified in voicing an educated opinion on the impact that taking more public lands will have on my sport. On the other hand, I really have no idea if we are being told the truth, that the public land in question is really needed for expansion or just a land grab by a huge government agency. I am hopeful that the Marine Corps can see how important this particular area is to many people and keep things as they are, or if necessary to reach some type of amicable compromise.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	4/28/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1451

**Last Name** Meyers

**First Name** Karen

**Comment** Because I live in Wonder Valley, I am very concerned about the Base Expansion plans. I personally know neighbors who live on Poleline Rd, who would be directly across the road from the MCB if the South Study Area were to be acquired for the expansion. Because of this, and because our own property value (on 3 properties) will drop even farther than it already has, I do not want the South Study Area to be acquired. As for the East Study Area, there will be many, many problems, mainly involving Amboy Road, if that Study Area is acquired. Believe me, it is MUCH more well-traveled than you are stating. We need Amboy Road to remain open at all times; therefore, I do not want the East Area to be acquired. Also, a little note about the Cleghorn Lakes Wilderness Area ..... this is a wonderful pristine desert area that is enjoyed by so many. It is the perfect getaway in which to hike and/or relax and really connect with nature. Please do not take it under any circumstances. I notice it is not in either Study Area, but I believe that is because it would be acquired later. Please leave it here for all of us, and for the generations in the future. And, as for the West Study Area, I truly hate to see the OHV enthusiasts lose any of this wonderful area for riding & events, but I have to say that I don't believe there are any residents in the OHV area, and any tortoises have long ago been killed or buried. Still, because of the intense use of this area by OHV riders, I do not want the West Area to be acquired. So, in summation, I really don't want to give up any land, but I also understand that you need it to accomplish training that helps keep our nation free, so the only logical solution is compromise. My suggestion involves everyone giving something (except

for Cleghorn Lakes!). In the South Study Area, I think you should take up to the 1st section line north of Poleline Rd. In the East Study Area, I think you should take up to the 1st section line west of Amboy Road (it would zig-zag as the road curves). And in the West Study Area, I think you should take up to the 6th section line east of The Rock Pile in the JV OHV Area. (If you are still TRULY short of the needed square miles, move the boundary west by 1 or 2 section lines.) In this manner, I think you could obtain the square miles that you need without devastating any single area. Thank you for considering my comments and suggestions. Sincerely, Karen L Meyers

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1452

**Last Name** cortum

**First Name** christopher

**Comment** My family have lived in California for 80 years, All I have see is the removal of public lands and closure of off road desert areas. Also I have seen enormous bases close and just sit there with the land not being used. Why dont you expand in an area that is NOT used by the hard working tax payers of ths country. We work and pay taxes and then our monies are used to take our preciuos lands from us. Come on, when is enough enough? The desert is huge, find someplace else.

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by

members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study(including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1453

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a man that has enjoyed the Desert and specifically the Johnson Valley all of my live it is a huge disservice to remove it from the public's access. There are fewer and fewer area in the Southern California area that provide the unique opportunities found in this area of the Mojave. While I hold the training of our Marines as a high priority I find it difficult to understand why now the need to annex such a unique area of the Southern California desert. Marines have been training for years without access to this area which is located so close to the 10 million residents of the greater Southern California area. I might suggest the Marines look at an area in Nevada, since the US Government already "owns" most all of the State. Limiting the Johnson Valley Area to the MARines is an insurmountable removal of Public lands that provide for the needs of literally millions of Californians. I am against changing the status of the Johnson Valley. I do not support the Marine Corps land acquisition and airspace establishment expansion in the Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for

live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1454

**Last Name** Hiemstra

**First Name** Raymond

**Comment** As a frequent user of the Johnson Valley OHV area I am concerned about the level of use the Marine Corps is requesting as part of the proposed Base expansion. I think a compromise can be worked out that allows greater access that envisioned in option 6. I suggest a new option that allows the marines exclusive use of the area in November and December and full public access at other times. There is no reason why the marines should be leaving ordinance after their training sessions that would preclude continued public use. This is a multiple use area that includes military use) and it should stay that way. There is room for the marines and the public to both use the entire area and this option needs further exploration as a separate option. Thank you for considering my comment

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1455

**Last Name** Henahan

**First Name** James

**Comment** I would like to express my enthusiasm for off-highway recreation in the Johnson Valley OHV (off-highway vehicle) area. I travel from the central coast of California to compete in sanctioned truck races in this OHV area. I always purchase fuel and food from local businesses when doing this. I

hope the USMC will continue to consider the recreation and economic needs of the public. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1456

**Last Name** Searah

**First Name** Raymond

**Comment** SAVE JOHNSON VALLEY

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1457

**Last Name** Searah

**First Name** Raymond

**Comment** SAVE THE HAMMERS!!! SAVE JOHNSON VALLEY!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1458

**Last Name** Searah

**First Name** Raymond

**Comment** SAVE THE HAMMERS!!! SAVE JOHNSON VALLEY!!!

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1459

**Last Name** VanPetten

**First Name** Karl

**Comment** Hello, I am against the DOD acquiring the area known as Johnson Valley Off Road Area. It is one of the Few ORV areas of it's kind if not the ONLY area of it's kind open to off road vehicles in North America. Please reconsider and perhaps choose a different location to train our military. I do appreciate our military and the fact that they need to train, but please don't take an area that means so much to so many. There are other areas for the military to train. I travel to the area from Washington State at least twice a year to recreate with my family. Losing Johnson Valley would be truly saddening. Thank you for your time. Karl VanPetten Sultan, Washington

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1460

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I was recently contacted by a good number of friends from the southern California area regarding the expansion of the marine training area in Johnson Valley. Granted, geographically I am far removed from the subject area, but I know all too well the distress this proposition has brought to the many people who have come to endear the area. As such, I would like to briefly offer my insight on the matter on their behalf. Legal, recreational land across the country is being seized for new commercial venues, private sector expansions and, yes, government and military staging and training areas at a progressively increasing rate. I hardly oppose these actions. They are all a fundamental part of our free, capitalist way of life in America. I also very strongly support the acquisition of new and appropriate training facilities for our troops and their subsidiaries. However, I do ask that such actions be thoroughly and deliberately planned and researched before being carried out. I hate to see such beautiful and unique landscape taken away from the public and the many events hosted there when suitable lands rest in just a short distance in another direction. I know the solution is never quiet that simple, but I urge the parties involved to explore any and all suitable and appropriate alternatives.

**Date Comment Received** 4/28/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1461

**Last Name** Underwood

**First Name** Terry

**Comment** As a Marine Veteran, I am the first to support our Corps and the freedom they allow us in this great country. It is the Marines and the rest of the

armed forces that allow me to enjoy my four-wheeling hobby; that being said, I join the others in the request for the Marine Corps to reconsider basing their training in Johnson Valley, home to one of our nation's best OHV areas. I live in Virginia Beach, but still enjoy watching The King Of The Hammers off-road and desert race competition in Johnson Valley and hope to compete in it someday The closure of Johnson Valley would be a detrimental loss to the recreationalist and four-wheel drive communities. I thank the Marine Corps for their service to our great country, and I pray that they might consider the desert areas surrounding Johnson Valley for the future location of their training facilities. Thank you for your time and consideration, Terry C. Underwood 3/2 Kilo Co, Wpns Plt, Assault Section 95-99|4/29/2011

**Date Comment Received**

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID**

1462

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Why should this landmark of off-roading territory be held out of public access? As an off-roader myself, I have often dreamed of going to Johnson Valley and enjoying the majesty that is currently available to the public. It is one of my goals to see that this dream is fulfilled but this will only be possible if it remains open to the public. Please seek out other venues to fulfill the needs of the Marines. I am extremely grateful and in debt to the people that serve in the Marines but surely there are other locations available for training exercises.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1463

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an entire offroad community, we are losing more and more areas for us to enjoy our hobby. Say you were obsessed with football and had to play everyday. Now say somebody doesnt like fields, or grass for that matter, and begins destroying any and all football fields, parks, or just any open area where you could play a game of football if you wanted to. Or say you are very religious and always go to church, but somebody decided to start demolishing churches one by one; gaining more power and momentum with each one and caring less and less for the people it affects.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1464

**Last Name** Hart

**First Name** Sreven

**Comment** Discussions within our club (Borrego 4 Wheelers) consistantly confirm to us that alternative 3 holds the best answer for the people of California. The OHV area is of great inportance to all in the off road community. Everyone from manufacturers of off road products, local business, and the family and friends who flock to this area will suffer if a closure is enacted. Johnson Valley is also home to the famous King of the Hammers race, which thousands of people consider the " World Series " of off road events. Borrego 4 Wheelers urges you to look elsewhere for the Marine Corps expansion. Steve Hart, President, Borrego 4 Wheelers

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1465

**Last Name** Stevens

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** I am a district 37 desert racer. johnson valley is an important part to the off road season and with it gone are riding area would be extremely small. My whole family loves riding and when we go out we bound, laugh and joke. i would hate for johnson valley to be closed down do to a new army base.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1466

**Last Name** mccallick

**First Name** james

**Comment** I am opposed to any change or restritions to land use that will lower the value and enjoyment of my land in the affected area I have not seen any reports on how this will afect the local residents and famlies due to the proposed restrictions to blm land and polices. There should be a vote for the residents and busness that will be affected prior to any changes to create a

report on how this will affect the public land users and land owners all of us should be contacted the provided info from the base & county is hard to gather and understand there needs to be a contact at the county for use

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. However, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1467

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a patriotic American who served time with the U.S. Army and I am an off- road vehicle enthusiast. I support the need for America's fighting men and women to have realistic training areas. However, I DO NOT support the acquisition of the Johnson Valley OHV area for our Marines to train. Multiple- use recreation has been constantly attacked by environmental groups, and we have been forced into ever smaller and smaller areas. Johnson Valley OHV area is THE premier OHV area in the entire country. Its closure to off-road use is unacceptable. The military has the ability to take nearly any area necessary for training'please select another area. I travel to the Johnson Valley OHV area regularly, and spend thousands of dollars in the area. When several tens of thousands of people visit the area each year for rockcrawling, mining, desert racing, motorcycle racing, and camping in the desert with their families, the impact of our use is beneficial to every community along the way when we stop to stock up on food, fuel, snacks, parts, etc. The economic impact of this closure to the nearby California communities Yucca Valley, Landers, Lucerne, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Victorville, and Barstow will be terrible. Finally, just as has happened when environmentalists have closed our trails, responsible off-

road enthusiasts are forced onto ever smaller areas, and even though we go to great lengths to Tread Lightly and minimize our impact on the environment, our impact is cumulative. The vast majority of us are patriotic supporters of our armed forces please do not take so much from some of your biggest advocates. I am in full support of a realistic training area for the Marines. I am in full opposition of using THIS area to train Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1468

**Last Name** Broaddus

**First Name** Nathan

**Comment** I don't understand why this Marine Corps base needs to take the land that we use. Is there not enough desert somewhere else that they can use? We have been racing and riding for fun in this area for a long, long time now and now the Marines think that it would be ok just to take it from us. Offroad racing and riding originated right in this area that you guys are

purposing to take away from the sport. The offroad motorcycles that are made today are because of the California Desert right in this area. Japanese companies would come all the way to this area just to test their bikes on this terrain. The countless families that come to this area for family vacations will now not be able to come and do so. Tell the Marine Corps that they can do live fire tests in the parts of the desert that no one uses. Plenty of people use the are that is being taken from us.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1469

**Last Name** Swanson

**First Name** David

**Comment** Its ridiculous that THEY are willing to close down a huge area of land that I grew up riding and having fun with family members for over 35 years. The impact on local stores,fast food and gas stations in that area will be huge. So lets see...close the area so the military can just come in and destroy it with tanks and mortor shells. Ther are thousands of acres of dessert on the other side of the base that is not being used..go there and leave our designated OHV area alone.

**Date Comment Received** 4/29/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1470

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I believe Alternative #3 to be in the best interest of the people. Closing areas of the people's land to the people is un-American. It goes against the principals we are fighting for overseas. Too much American land has been removed from the public's use and enjoyment already. Choose alternative #3 because; The area has already been used for training by the military in the past, No impact to OHV, camping hiking and such opportunities in Johnson Valley, Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated Economy will be less affected Thanks,

**Date Comment Received** 4/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1471

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I believe Alternative #3 to be in the best interest of the people. Closing areas of the people's land to the people is un-American. It goes against the

principals we are fighting for overseas. Too much American land has been removed from the public's use and enjoyment already. Choose alternative #3 because; The area has already been used for training by the military in the past, No impact to OHV, camping hiking and such opportunities in Johnson Valley, Less impact to local business owners Less impact to recreational opportunities Less populated Economy will be less affected  
Thanks,

**Date Comment Received** 4/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1472

**Last Name** Kritzberger

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Regarding the "Johnson Valley" proposed area, I strongly urge a "no action" action be taken to conserve what few recreation areas we have left.

**Date Comment Received** 4/30/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1473

**Last Name** Poillon

**First Name** Peter

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment** I am in favor of the expansion of the 29 palms Marine Base area

**Date Comment Received** 4/30/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1474

**Last Name** Gasper

**First Name** Scot

**Comment** I have opened Lucerne Valley Investment Inc. this year. We are planing to open three new business in Lucerne Valley,Ca. I am planing to spend \$4,500,000.00 Dollars, and hire about 50 people. If this land Acquisitions happens I will lose money and will not be able to hire as many people. We will count on the off- road user that use that land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/1/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1475

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am against the marine expansion johnson valley aka hammers is a wonderful area me friends and family enjoy many trips a year to there to enjoy camping and rock crawling and it's also the home of koh it would be a shame to see our spots we enjoy keep disappearing left and right please keep our lands open so everyone can keep enjoying the location for years to come

**Date Comment Received** 5/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1476

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am against the marine expansion johnson valley aka hammers is a wonderful area me friends and family enjoy many trips a year to there to enjoy camping and rock crawling and it's also the home of koh it would be a shame to see our spots we enjoy keep disappearing left and right please keep our lands open so everyone can keep enjoying the location for years to come

**Date Comment Received** 5/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1477

**Last Name** Riddoch

**First Name** Tammy

**Comment** Great family sport - dont take it away!

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1478

**Last Name** Riddoch

**First Name** ray

**Comment** Dont wreck this

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1479

**Last Name** Mitchell

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** I SUPPORT THE MARINES PROPOSED ALT 6 EXPANSION TO FACILITATE BRIGADE LEVEL COMBINED FIRE TRAINING. I live 2 miles from the south boundary of the 29 Palms base and am familiar with Marines training. The proposed Alt 6 seems like a well thought out plan that seeks to preserve limited public use while providing an extremely important training ability. The small reduction in occasional recreational use of the area, is a very small price to pay for insuring that Marines are as well prepared as possible when they put their life in harms way to protect all of us. There should be no higher purpose for use of this land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1480

**Last Name** SanAngelo

**First Name** Darren

**Comment** We all of us in the off road community need these places to go and ride, camp, 4X4, hike, some of us make our living off of those who use these lands. It will be a great injustice to us they are taking away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1481

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Reviewing the air spaces around the base would really hurt the air traffic in our area. I am a glider pilot and a Private pilot. I am also a member of the 29 Soaring Club which operates at the Twentynine palms airport. With the MOA around the airport it would become very difficult to fly at the airport. For the power side of flying it will make it difficult to transition the aera to such places as Big Bear, Apple Valley, Parker, AZ, Gene, NV. just to name a few. The military aircraft won't monitor the common Frequency in the area, we as civilians sure cannot monitor their frequency, so there is mid air collision waiting to happen. As the Club flies the gliders at altitudes from the ground all the way up to 10,000 ft. This MOA is a bad idea and will make the air space more dangerous and crowded then it is already.

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps is sensitive to the potential effects the airspace proposals could have on commercial, business, and general aviation activities and will seek means to accommodate those interests to the greatest extent possible while also striving to meet their flight training requirements. The airspace proposals will be examined in depth by the FAA and any measures required to mitigate impacts will be discussed with the Marine Corps, airport operators, and other aviation interests, as appropriate. The FAA outlines procedures for public use

airports within boundaries of restricted airspace, these procedures will be followed for all airspace proposals. Marine Corps representatives will continue to maintain outreach programs to the civil aviation community to discuss their aviation requirements and those options that will best serve all interest in sharing use of the Combat Center airspace. The location of your particular airstrip will be taken into consideration for boundary revisions throughout the NEPA and FAA process.

**Comment ID** 1482

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I believe that the proposed plan to expand into existing California OHV land should be reconstructed or reconsidered altogether based on necessity of land use for military purposes and the funding of this expansion. It is clear that the majority of Californians, and every Californian thereof utilizing these lands for their own enjoyment, is AGAINST this military base expansion, and I support their cause to save Johnson Valley and surrounding OHV areas of the Mojave.

**Date Comment Received** 5/2/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1483

**Last Name** Cummings

**First Name** Arvid

**Comment** LEAVE JOHNSON VALLEY ALONE,,I VOTE FOR ALTERNATIVE # 3

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1484

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My husband works long hard hours all week, looking forward to the weekend so he and our son can go riding in Johnson Valley. We pay our taxes and receive no welfare whatsoever. In today economy, it's about the only fun thing we can afford to do. We can't afford Disneyland visits, movie outings etc. PLEASE leave Johnson Valley open for to the public. We know so many other families that enjoy weekends out there too. It really is important family time for us and stress relief after a long work week.

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1485

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please enlarge the 29 Palms Base to the East

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1486

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There is no reason to expand into Johnson Valley area. The marine base already has plenty of land for training use. I believe this only to be a land/power grab and unnecessary for military training purposes. LEAVE JOHNSON VALLEY ALONE!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1487

**Last Name** Westbrook

**First Name** Norma

**Comment** I realize the Marines may need more space to do maneuvers, but why take the land that is being used for recreation away to the west of 29 Palms. What is wrong with the land to the east and to the north of state highway 40. There is plenty of open land out there. Besides coming west you will interfere with the economy of the town of Lucerne Valley and Apple Valley, the market, gas stations, and restaurants will all suffer from this take-over of already useful land. Do the politicians realize this or do they want to look good, and care about what is good for citizens?

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1488

**Last Name** Skelton

**First Name** Teri

**Comment** Come on please leave the land alone that families are using for family activities. The military has enough land. If the marines need to have more room, go down to Camp Pendleton and use it. Everyone is taking away the land we all like having fun on four wheeling with our families in a good environment. The Military has enough land to use, use it before you take more away from the people. I totally understand the military need training and I have no problem with that... Train them where the land is already there for you!

**Date Comment Received** 5/3/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1489

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We understand the marines needs some area to train in.. But when will it stop. Everything the Public has is being taken away from us.. This country is turning out to be no greater then any other country.. Its turning out to be not so much the land of the free any more.. There is alot of Desert in the West and plenty for the Marines to train in. I am very gratefull for the things the armed forces do for us. But we need to continue to make this land worth defending. Keep this the land of the free and a place for all of us to be proud to call home. open land needs to remain open land. Please find another area for the training grounds.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1490

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For the past 12 years I have gone the Johnson Valley OHV area around Soggy Dry Lake many times a year to ride motorcycles, Jeep, and landsail on the dry lakes. It should be noted the sheer volume of people that recreate in the area, and thus spend money in the surrounding communities. In fact just the other day I went out with a group of friends for a short day of Jeeping, and each of us spent roughly one hundred dollars on snacks in the morning, fuel, and dinner. If the tourism to the Johnson Valley goes away, so will the economic value to the local businesses.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1491

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For over a decade I have traveled to the Johnson Valley OHV area to recreate in the beautiful terrain. Environmentalists often complain Jeeps, motorcycles, and racers destroy the land. But the Marines will be the ones who destroy the land. Tanks, guns, bombs, and tractors are what destroy the land. Just two weeks ago I was in Johnson Valley OHV and saw a tortoise. A tank would have just squished nearly every bush, flower, and tortoise in

sight. The Marines do not need as much additional training grounds as they seek.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates geological impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.12 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to soils from military vehicle operations, ordnance delivery, and infantry training.

**Comment ID** 1492

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** All my life I have grown up around the offroad community, I am now 19 years old and have seen and been around many offroad areas, from Johnson Valley OHV, Ivanpha Dry Lake, Glamis, Pismo, and Superior Dry Lake, and virtually every place myself, my family, or friends have run across some form of military paraphernalia in areas deemed for public use. We have seen everything from military plane wrecks, to unexploded ordinance all in public offroad areas. The Marines do not need more land, and the 10 months of open public use for the Johnson Valley will not work. Accidents happen and bombs get dropped in the wrong places. Thus the marines should not take the southern portion of Johnson Valley including the lands just north of the Hammers to the Rock Pile. This land should remain open year round as part of the Johnson Valley OHV area. This will minimize the chances of additional military paraphernalia becoming lost in public offroad areas.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS). If acquired lands were transferred back to public domain, the Marine Corps would be required to comply with range closure procedures (USEPA 40 CFR Part 300),

Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Base Realignment and Closure Policies (BRAC), Reporting Hazardous Substance Activity When Selling or Transferring Federal Real Property (40 CFR Part 373), and Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) (10 USC 2701).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1493

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The vast majority of land that people recreate in is in the southern portion of Johnson Valley OHV area. Of course the Hammers are a hot spot. But so are Soggy Dry Lake and the Rock Pile. I have grown up riding motorcycles from Soggy Dry Lake. Soggy Dry Lake is in my opinion, and the opinion of many others, the last place for families to offroad and recreate in California. It is one of the few places where the region is conducive to children, with little drinking and partying occurring. Since the area is quieter than say Glamis, many children learn to ride in the Soggy Dry Lake Area. It is the perfect quiet place to teach children how to land sail, fly remote control air planes, make and launch small toy rockets, and see tortoises, which we saw just a couple weeks ago. Keep the southern portion of Johnson Valley OHV open from the Hammers to the Rock Pile for the families. Please see the attached map.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1494

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The offroad community respects the Marines and all armed forces. But with that said, the Marines want to take far too much land. We understand you want more land to train on, but you are already the finest military in the world. So we encourage you to only take the northern portion of Johnson Valley OHV. Leave the southern portion open permanently year round with no permits. This land to the south is to remain part of the Johnson Valley OHV area. Thus the Hammers, Melville and Soggy Dry Lakes, and the Rock Pile will be open solely for recreation year round. In other words the areas with the highest levels of visitors are to remain open for use. Please see the attached map of the desired boundary myself and others feel leaves both the Marines and recreation community satisfied.

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1495

**Last Name** Saugstad

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I am submitting this email againstst the land acquistion in twenty nine palms.I grew up in this desert and continue to use this area for family vacations. As a tax paying citizen and a proud american I beleive this militay need is excessive and will have a larger impact on the surrounding cities and citizens than what the military will gain from this new training area. Thank you, Greg Saugstad

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1496

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been around the military air space and a pilot who has navigated around the space in the 29 palms area. To date I have never seen this air space congested and in fact I have never enocountered a military aircraft near the borders of the air space. I do not understand how the aquisition of land near residential communities could be necessary. To take recreational land from a specific group of people amounts to a discrimination. It is a sad day to think this area is now so important with a administration who is bent on less military. I'm sure there are alternatives less intrusive to a specific communiuty that will definately cause financial harm to associated bussinesses. Sincerely, Randy

**Date Comment Received** 5/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to

establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1497
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Please reconsider your efforts to discriminate against off road communities.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/4/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1498
<b>Last Name</b>	Schneider
<b>First Name</b>	Kurt
<b>Comment</b>	With the documents being so large, the public comment period is not long enough for many of us to take the time to go over all of the information

provided. Please extend the current public comment period by at least another 30 days. 90 days would even be better. Thank you Kurt Schneider

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1499

**Last Name** Dottenwhy

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** Go East !

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1500

**Last Name** Dottenwhy

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** go east

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1501

**Last Name** Henke

**First Name** Darren

**Comment** Need to move this operation to the east. Do not take more public land away. This is an outstanding area and also brings in revenue for the local economy and the BLM. Use other options...

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1502

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please GO EAST instead. The Johnson Valley OHV area is an integral part of enjoying and learning about the outdoors for ourselves and our children. Do not close access to this land to my public access as well events and other recreational activities. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1503

**Last Name** strawmier

**First Name** matt

**Comment** GO EAST!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1504

**Last Name** Hayes

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1505

**Last Name** Netzer

**First Name** Neil

**Comment** Please do not close or reduce the public lands in the Johnson Valley area. This area is a public treasure and one of the few remaining high desert areas open to OHV use. My family and I have enjoyed dirt bike riding and camping at Johnson Valley for over 20 years. We are running out of areas to recreate!

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1506

**Last Name** Hoover

**First Name** Laura

**Comment** I am writing in regard to the US Marine Corps wanting to take land away from families like myself who enjoy the great outdoors. I have been going to the Johnson Valley area since I was a child and now take my children out to the same area. I am afraid that if the Marines take the land to play war games and the like we will no longer be able to frequent that area. Many people go to Johnson Valley because it is not quite as crowded as other locales that are of equal distance. It is truly a "family" area where parents can teach their children to ride in a safe area where people look out for one another. There are so many things to see and do at Johnson Valley that it would all be missed should that land be acquired by the Marines. I urge you to take No Action at all, or at the very least, use Option #6, but guarantee that the public will be able to use the land all year-round. Thank you in advance for your attention to my personal concern.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1507

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1508

**Last Name** Lark

**First Name** Brad

**Comment** I'm a CA native and have recreated in the desert my entire life. Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the

national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. Keep Johnson Valley open for public use, stop the base expansion as outlined in the DEIS. Sincerely, Concerned Californian

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1509

**Last Name** Lark

**First Name** Brad

**Comment** Johnson Valley is home to many internationally famous jeeping trails. People come from all over the world to enjoy the unique rocks here. Closing JV to public us would be akin to the Tibetan Government closing Mt. Everest to thrill seeking climbers. Please don't take more of our open space away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1510

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives, I strongly support only Alternative A. Due to the public objection to the project I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1511

**Last Name** Dunlap

**First Name** Darryl

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability As a former E-5 Sgt in the US Army, I understand the importance of training, but feel this expansion proposal oversteps reasonable bounds and is not practical in this current time of budget constraints.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1512
<b>Last Name</b>	Amador
<b>First Name</b>	Don
<b>Comment</b>	Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps

has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire

and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1513
<b>Last Name</b>	Mumm
<b>First Name</b>	Rhonda
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/5/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p>

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID**

1514

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a

NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better

accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1515
<b>Last Name</b>	Waite
<b>First Name</b>	Patrick
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. Additionally, the Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/5/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p>

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID**

1516

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I am not in support of the Marines taking anymore land for their training exercises in the Johnson Valley Region. This is everyone's land, and once it is used for military use, it will never go back to the public. That means my family and my heirs will never have access to the area to recreate. Please do not take Johnson Valley away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1517

**Last Name** Capp

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** Further limiting off-road areas to public access does not make sense in this current financial and troublesome environment. My family all enjoy OHV areas, but the areas are becoming lost as further and further expansion and restrictions encroach on our futures. Many of the reasons for encroachment seem dubious at best, and political at worst. It is time to consider the views of OHV enthusiasts and defer to their desires to continue use of those proposed areas. It is certainly important to me and my family.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1518

**Last Name** Whiston

**First Name** Frank

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and

the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-

sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1519

**Last Name** Golde

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Dear Sirs, I am writing today to again to oppose the expansion of 29 Palms Training Land/Airspace Acquisition Project into the West Section and into Johnson Valley OHV Area. I respectfully request that you only choose Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability Osama Bin Ladin is now dead. You do not need to fight in these hellhole countries anymore. I have a home in Landers just a few miles from the current western boundary of the Marine Base and I also recreate with my family and friends in the BLM Johnson Valley OHV Open Area (JVOA). The proposed expansion into this area is not at all a good idea for taxpayers. Thousands of Californians live in the Landers and Johnson Valley area and

thousands more come to relax and play, to enjoy the clean and quiet Mojave Desert. It is absolutely NOT appropriate to move your activities so close to the general public. I am especially disturbed with the potential loss of real estate value that the expansion will have on my property and that of my neighbors, not to mention the loss of the investment of millions of dollars in California Green Sticker funds to develop and maintain the Johnson Valley Open Area (JVOA). Each year, dozens of off-road events for motorcycles, ATV's, dune buggies and Jeeps are held in the JVOA and enjoyed by thousands of people who work hard all week long for a weekend of play here. This immense social benefit would be lost with the Marine's expansion into this area. Leave Johnson Valley alone.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. However, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1520  
**Last Name** McMillan  
**First Name** Don  
**Comment** Don't move into Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area . Move east NOT west to Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area . Thanks.  
**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1521  
**Last Name** Pave  
**First Name** Lars  
**Comment** As a patriot and an off-road enthusiast, I must urge the fine servicemen and public employees to not expand land use at Twentynine Palms base at the expense of OHV. Although I recognize the needs of the USMC, the land in question is part of a quickly depleting resource in California for OHV use. Our public lands have been rapidly removed from our use and we must protect whatever land we have left for the enjoyment of our families. Please do not expand at the expense of OHV. Thank you.  
**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1522

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Sirs, I am writing this in concern to the proposed closing of Johnson valley. I feel that with the current economical situation of the US government that expansion is the wrong direction to take and that closing Johnson valley would hurt a number of OHV users and business. The US military has untold acres of land not being used effectively now, more would be a waste of time, monies, and energy. Please keep Johnson Valley open! respectfully, Curtis Hill

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1523

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. My brother spent his time in the core and I fully support the Marines but feel it would be a shame to destroy a widely used public area when other solutions are available and appear to be a better fit for the training the core wishes to move forward on.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1524

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep Johnson Valley OHV area open!!!. THERE IS PLENTY OF OTHER LANDTO USE. Johnson Valley OHV area has been a tradition to many family generations of OHV destanation and everyday local getaway. PLEASE LEAVE IT ALONE

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008.

Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1525

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability Please do not take even more OHV opportunities away from the OHV community and cram us even into a smaller area-we have lost more than enough already.This is very important to me.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1526
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Alternative 6 seems to be the best compromise between the military and local residents. I also support the EIR.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/5/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1527

**Last Name** Kilpatrick

**First Name** Pat

**Comment** Gentlemen, I submit these comments concerning the proposed land acquisition for the MCAGCC or MAGTF-TC. My main concern is for the Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation area, alternative six. As a retired Marine Infantryman (MOS 0311, 0313, 0369), with combat experience, I fully understand the value of live fire training. Fire and movement and fire and maneuver are the essence of the Corps and its successful mission accomplishment across the Globe. My family and friends use Johnson Valley OHV at least ten times throughout the year. It is the only riding area within an hour's drive of Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley. My three children, wife and I all have ATVs that we enjoy riding in the beautiful desert of Johnson Valley. If the OHV area were to be closed, and eventually it would be closed, we would have to travel a lot further in order to go riding. With the price of fuel as high as it is that probably wouldn't happen. This will lead to the sale of all ATV's thus impacting the local economy, I would no longer have them serviced and repaired by the local shops nor would I purchase additional ridding products. Additionally, Johnson Valley is home to ΓÇ£The King of the HammersΓÇ¥ race. This event attracts teams for across the world bringing in a large volume of income during that time. I ask you to put more thought into alternative 3. Yes it will be more difficult for maneuver elements but show me a difficulty the Marine Corps can't overcome. Please consider the economic impact in these difficult times. Alternative three is my personal recommendation. Semper Fidelis Kilpatrick, Pat P. SSgt USMC (Retired)

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1528

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for

live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1529
<b>Last Name</b>	Tapert
<b>First Name</b>	Ken
<b>Comment</b>	Leave the land as it is.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/5/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 1530

**Last Name** Pender

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** We need the open land. the government does not need anymore land. As far as I can tell when I go to Johnson Valley everybody takes care of their trash and the upkeep of the land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1531

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for

1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1532

**Last Name** hoskins

**First Name** john

**Comment** from the bottom of me heart, please keep Johnson Valley open to public off roading. it has been a tradition in our family for years, my father (RIP) learned how to ride a dirt bike there, I learned how to ride there, and i taught my son how to ride there. on another note, i work in the field of drug and alcohol recovery and i bring clients ranging from 18yo on up to senior citizens to experience nature and ride quads and show them that there is more to life than abusing illegal substanses. the venue that Johnson Valley offers is unique in being able to camp, ride, hike, and staregaze. we have a good success rate i feel is due to Johnson Valley. please allow us to continue the use of this valuable land!

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1533

**Last Name** Parker

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** Thursday, May 5, 2011 Z107.7 Local News (Yucca Valley Radio Station) YUCCA VALLEY TOWN COUNCIL AGAINST MARINE BASE EXPANSION INTO JOHNSON VALLEY The Yucca Valley Town Council came out loud and strong in opposition to the Twentynine Palms Marine Corps base's plan to expand into the Johnson Valley OHV area.

Reporter Tami Roleff has the second in her two-part report... The Yucca Valley Town Council heard a report at its regular meeting Tuesday about the Marine Corps' proposed base expansion into the Johnson Valley Off-Road Vehicle area. If the expansion goes through as proposed, the Marine Corps would take more than 108,000 acres of the ORV area's 189,470 acres for its exclusive use. Only 43,000 acres or so would be available for the public to use year-round; the remaining area would be available only 10 months of the year. The popular off-road event, King of the Hammers, would be affected by the base expansion. The Council was informed that the economic impact of the base taking over the ORV land would range from \$1.5 to \$5 million, depending on whose figures you believe the Federal government's, or the Town's. In addition, if the expansion goes through, the Marine Corps would place restrictions on airspace, requiring planes to stay below 1500 feet elevation. Town Manager Mark Nuaimi and the Council agreed that the Town needs support from the entire community to fight the base expansion. "Full frontal assault... Outreach to the Chamber of Commerce, I heard legislators, business community, put it on our website, Full court press, will do." All members of the Council agreed unanimously that while they're big supporters of the military and the Marine base, they strongly object to the Marine Corps' proposed expansion into Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/5/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1534

**Last Name** Smith

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** Please do not close our beloved arena. The terrain there is so amazing that people have heard of it world wide. Johnson valley is not only an amazing family area without the mass dangers of glamis, it is home to the king of the hammers a world wide event. I got into rock crawling so my family can all be together without a coroner or two always circling like glamis. Take it all into consideration. There is so much land around the other side. Please go there and leave our small area alone.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1535

**Last Name** Griffith

**First Name** Billynda

**Comment** We do a lot of camping and family activities in this area. It is home away from home for us. Please do not take this area from our children. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1536

**Last Name** Blair

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I support Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1537

**Last Name** Podsiad

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** What is the purpose of the Marine Corps taking more public land? There is plenty that has already been consumed, 100,000 acres, between Fort Irwin and China Lake. I have no idea how many acres 29 palms has already consumed but there is no way they need more land our forces have already proved they are very effective in all regions worldwide, with this in mind there isn't a true need for additional lands.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1538

**Last Name** lombardo

**First Name** josh

**Comment** please do not close this amazing and unique piece of land to the public. my family comes together and shares many weekends a year out there bringing us close and spending money in many of the surrounding communities. this is also one of the last free or cheap places to recreate. we are tired of seeing our publics land closed and taken away from us. losing johnson valley will be our last push to get us to leave the state of california. There really is nothing like johnson valley in the entire country or even the world. i am currently building a race car for the king of the hammers race. and between car parts, fuel, food, gas, firweood, water etc we spend a substantial amount of money in the surrounding communities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1539

**Last Name** lombardo

**First Name** nicole

**Comment** please do not close this amazing and unique piece of land to the public. my family comes together and shares many weekends a year out there bringing us close and spending money in many of the surrounding communities. this is also one of the last free or cheap places to recreate. we are tired of seeing our publics land closed and taken away from us. losing johnson valley will be our last push to get us to leave the state of california. There really is nothing like johnson valley in the entire country or even the world. i am currently building a race car for the king of the hammers race. and between car parts, fuel, food, gas, firweood, water etc we spend a substantial amount of money in the surrounding communities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1540

**Last Name** PIPER

**First Name** ROBERT

**Comment** I am writing in opposition to the 29 Palms DEIS project. I have been participating in AMA D-37 desert racing and pleasure trail riding with my family & friends in the Johnson Valley "recreation area" for over thirty years,as the surrounding "Public Lands" have been withdrawn from OHV access over the decades . Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process.4rdj2

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1541

**Last Name** PIPER

**First Name** ROBERT

**Comment** I believe that any expansion of Military land use should occur on the Mexican border. Perhaps the presence of our tanks & troops on the border would discourage the "Foreign Invasion" from illegal aliens. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. Johnson valley belongs to the people ,go find your own sand-box to play in !

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1542

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take away Johnson valley, I spent roughly 200 days of last year out there and plan to do so again this year. The revenues that these towns receive from cross traffic is huge, and a much needed source of income for our small towns.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1543

**Last Name** Deckard

**First Name** Ralph

**Comment** There are lot's or reasons for not expanding in this location,we support our troops,but not this Land Grab by our Government,we are fed up with all branches of our government including the Forest Service,B.L.M.who are caving into environmental wacko's and there law suit,s and stealing more and more of our public lands and closing them off to our use,we are not destroying it by driving on it,or any other use,it's always been about money and control,and we are fighting back as best we can to save our freedoms and liberties that make America Great,and we the American people want these land grabs stopped,we don't need or want it.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1544

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The great respect for our fighting men and women notwithstanding, a review of the DEIS indicates that the base expansion is based on the assumption that there is a need for three Marine Expeditionary Brigades to train simultaneously. Upon review, it appears the DOD has developed a proposal based on an outdated segregated training model. Also, questions regarding the cost of the base expansion; given budget constraints, the current fiscal crisis and ballooning national deficit; have been raised. Off-highway vehicle recreation is a very popular family activity, especially in Southern California. According to the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR), between 1980 and 2007 the number of registered OHVs has increased 370%.

Unfortunately, since 1980 the amount of desert lands available for this type of recreation has fallen dramatically. Due to its proximity to southern California metropolitan areas, Johnson Valley is one of the most important areas to serve this growing demand for both in-state and out- of-state visitors.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1545

**Last Name** Havlik

**First Name** Frank

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps

Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1546

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Go East, please

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1547

**Last Name** Evans

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I want to start by saying that even though I personally believe that the armed services of this country are an important asset, I also want to state that with out opportunity to enjoy this country there services are completely lost. I was at an OHV commission meeting in Hollister a few weeks ago trying to stop the closure of clear creek when We were told to recreate at on of the other parks when the crowd erupted "WHAT OTHER PARKS".. This statement is not a joke. there are very few possibly 10 parks left in California with recreational benefits like Johnson valley and every single one is facing closure for one reason or another. I also don't want to see Johnson valley turned into something like what we have here in Monterrey, a used up base falling apart and unusable by the people due to live ammo rounds left behind in the soils. Thousands of acres at fort Ord have been abandoned and are now useless. I'm tired of losing land and don't think that it is appropriate that Johnson valley be stolen without an land exchange of some sort that is equal or greater than what is being taken.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1548

**Last Name** Buchanan

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for

live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1549
<b>Last Name</b>	Griffith
<b>First Name</b>	Clint
<b>Comment</b>	My Grandpa used to work for the San Bernardino sherrifs department and was stationed here in the 1960s and my familys been here ever since. I was born here and grew up playing in Johnson Valley. Now I take my kids out in the desert to play and I want to be able to continue to do so. Hundreds of people drive by my hous to play in JV evory week and on big weekends thousands. You cant take all thous people and put them in one small area it unsafe. Way to many people play here go fast cars, rock crawlers, motercycles, and little kids on quads all need room to be safe. If you crame them all togather in one small spot people will die.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps also understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1550

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Dear Sir: As much as I support our military I do not support your plan to expand the 29 Palms Marine Base that will close off Johnson Valley to the public. Families need this wonderful "playground" to enjoy time together an to get out of the house an show their kids there is more to life then video games. If you want these kids to be strong an have the abilities you require of them when they decide to join the military they need a place to develop these skills. Or are you looking for a bunch of weak kneed whusie's to put on the ground in the next battle ground?!

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson

Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1551

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services."

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating

in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1552

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please understand that I do support our troops in every way. However the ORV community especially in the greater Los Angeles metro area has grown by 370% and Johnson Valley is one of the closest areas to ride. Closing this area would greatly increase fuel consumption, not to mention wear and tear by all of those users having to travel much further. We need to, as a nation try to use less, thus decreasing our dependance on foreign oil. Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public. The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for

live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1553
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Ok if you take the land then give us some where in souther cal To ride. There's no much left for families close by to do when It comes to off roading. And riverside county sucks theres only tracks to goto We need open land for all to enjoy Thank u Glenn Mattis
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/6/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over

time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1554

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please do not take land in the direction of johnson valley. This is one of the most popular places for faily camping and recreation ans the Marines owe that to the local community to find land in another direction. Please leave Johnson Valley for future generations to share just as it is.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1555

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This is one more example of governmental control pretending to provide additional security. China Lake, Fort Irwin, and Twentynine Palms already control/restrict an enormous part of Southern California deserts. The bases absolutely should not take more; please reference a map of Southern California. If you can control information, money, and natural resources you can control people. "Those who trade liberty for security have neither".  
~John Adams

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1556

**Last Name** Mitchell

**First Name** Mary

**Comment** Closing this park would be a travesty.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1557

**Last Name** Meyers

**First Name** Ted

**Comment** As a resident of Wonder Valley for over 30 years, I have seen a large change in the traffic on Amboy road. If the expansion took in Amboy Road, it would cause a problem for the people in Wonder Valley. Plus the fact that a lot of land in the east end of Wonder Valley (Sheephole Pass) is wilderness areas. This would be a major disruption on Amboy Road if the expansion were to come this way. Property values in Wonder Valley would drop, plus our water table could be affected. I personally have a well and I'm concerned. Also, the animal life in the Sheephole Pass area and all the wilderness areas would be affected. In my opinion, I believe Johnson Valley would be the ideal base expansion area because it would not bother home owners or the environment because it is already an off-road area. That area would give you more land to expand. I feel the people in Yucca Valley, especially the city Council, are against expansion in Johnson Valley because of the money end of it, not the personal hardships it would cause in the expansion to the east. I believe the Marines do need the expansion. The land in Johnson Valley would be a perfect solution and wouldn't affect the people in Wonder Valley. I believe the Yucca Valley City Council is wrong in their belief. They're strictly looking at the money angle, not the hardships.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see Section 4.6 of the EIS for information on expected impacts to Transportation and Circulation. Under Alternative 3, significant impacts to transportation would be expected as North Amboy Road would require closure for two days per year. Under all other alternatives, impacts to Transportation and Circulation and expected to be less than significant. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1558

**Last Name** Waggoner

**First Name** Cody

**Comment** I am concerned for the well being of all the families that use this public land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. As a result of comments received during the Draft EIS public comment period, Alternative 6 has been further revised (in consultation with representatives from the OHV community) to increase public access to key portions of Johnson Valley and to reduce impacts on recreation.

**Comment ID** 1559

**Last Name** Bender

**First Name** Daryl

**Comment**

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other

and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1560

**Last Name** Tret

**First Name** Rick

**Comment** I am opposed to this expansion of MCB 29 Palms. I do not think it is necessary. The U.S. military already controls vast areas of the desert south west, and although I appreciate the need for training and readiness, there currently exists sufficient controlled area to accomplish that training.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section of 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1561

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** The economic impact to the residents and businesses surrounding Johnson Valley will be severely impacted by the loss of OHV use by the reduction of Johnson Valley OHV area. The study in which the DEIS concludes that "the loss of revenue will be compensated by the increase in personnel during maneuvers" sic. is based on flawed and incomplete data. The EIS must correct and prove that these businesses will not be adversely affected by the withdrawal of this land from OHV use.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for

OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1562

**Last Name** Townsend

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 30+ times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Cougar Buttes and Means Dry Lake, where we engage in such activities as Camping and Motorcycle riding. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 100 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 150-200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature.

This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1563

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project- related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 2 times a year where we enjoy off road dirt biking. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 100 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized many local businesses, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty- nine Palms

Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1564

**Last Name** Storz

**First Name** Neil

**Comment** I have been riding motorcycles there for years, and have helped clean it many of times, while the government let it get dirty and the roads deterioratte, now they want to take it away now that its been takwn care of.

As citizen I say the government should leave Johnson Valley as is and find a location Colorado, Utah, Arizona, or Nevada; but not Johnson Valley

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1565

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I love Johnson Valley. It is my favorite OHV recreation area in Southern California. I ride and race there regularly, purchase food and products from local vendors when I am there, and visit at least 20 times per year. Restricting access to Johnson Valley OHV would take away from me the primary reason I live in Southern California.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1566

**Last Name** Mathys

**First Name** John

**Comment** The recreating public has enjoyed the open expanses of the Johnson Valley for at least the past 50 years. This 189,000 acre open area is the largest remaining area of public land in the Western United States, and current estimates are that 800,000 to 1,000,000 visitors recreate throughout the area annually. I personally enjoy family camping and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreating, 4x4 competitions, rock hounding, hiking and wildlife viewing. Johnson Valley presents an unparalleled landscape for me, an OHV enthusiast as well as hiker, camper and event watcher in that location. Since 1980, the amount of desert lands available for off-road recreation has fallen dramatically. In fact, recent Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) user surveys show an ever-increasing demand for these types of motorized recreational activities and areas. Johnson Valley is one of the most important areas left for serving this growing demand for both in state and out of state visitors. My family and I visit this area 6-8 or sometimes more times a year and we spend a lot of money during each trip at local restaurants, gas stations and when buying supplies. Each trip probably costs us \$300-500 dollars. Another concern of mine is that the loss of using the Johnson Valley area would cause too many OHV enthusiasts to be displaced to other areas that are smaller and overcrowding and damage could occur in those areas leading to possible future closures in those areas. I am very much concerned about our fighting forces and their training but I also believe that the training is less necessary as we should be pulling out of places like Afghanistan and Iraq and/or training in other locations. Regards, John Mathys

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1567

**Last Name** Mathys

**First Name** Kathy

**Comment** The recreating public has enjoyed the open expanses of the Johnson Valley for at least the past 50 years. This 189,000 acre open area is the largest remaining area of public land in the Western United States, and current estimates are that 800,000 to 1,000,000 visitors recreate throughout the area annually. I personally enjoy family camping and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreating, 4x4 competitions, rock hounding, hiking and wildlife viewing. Johnson Valley presents an unparalleled landscape for me, an OHV enthusiast as well as hiker, camper and event watcher in that location. Since 1980, the amount of desert lands available for off-road recreation has fallen dramatically. In fact, recent Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) user surveys show an ever-increasing demand for these types of motorized recreational activities and areas. Johnson Valley is one of the most important areas left for serving this growing demand for both in state and out of state visitors. My family and I visit this area 6-8 or sometimes more times a year and we spend a lot of money during each trip at local restaurants, gas stations and when buying supplies. Each trip probably costs us \$300-500 dollars. Another concern of mine is that the loss of using the Johnson Valley area would cause too many OHV enthusiasts to be displaced to other areas that are smaller and overcrowding and damage could occur in those areas leading to possible future closures in those areas. I am very much concerned about our fighting forces and their training but I also believe that the training is less necessary as we should be pulling out of places like Afghanistan and Iraq and/or training in other locations. Regards, Kathy Mathys

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1568

**Last Name** Mathys

**First Name** Sean

**Comment** The recreating public has enjoyed the open expanses of the Johnson Valley for at least the past 50 years. This 189,000 acre open area is the largest remaining area of public land in the Western United States, and current estimates are that 800,000 to 1,000,000 visitors recreate throughout the area annually. I personally enjoy family camping and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreating, 4x4 competitions, rock hounding, hiking and wildlife viewing. Johnson Valley presents an unparalleled landscape for me, an OHV enthusiast as well as hiker, camper and event watcher in that location. Since 1980, the amount of desert lands available for off-road recreation has fallen dramatically. In fact, recent Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) user surveys show an ever-increasing demand for these types of motorized recreational activities and areas. Johnson Valley is one of the most important areas left for serving this growing demand for

both in state and out of state visitors. My family and I visit this area 6-8 or sometimes more times a year and we spend a lot of money during each trip at local restaurants, gas stations and when buying supplies. Each trip probably costs us \$300-500 dollars. Another concern of mine is that the loss of using the Johnson Valley area would cause too many OHV enthusiasts to be displaced to other areas that are smaller and overcrowding and damage could occur in those areas leading to possible future closures in those areas. I am very much concerned about our fighting forces and their training but I also believe that the training is less necessary as we should be pulling out of places like Afghanistan and Iraq and/or training in other locations. Regards, Sean Mathys

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1569

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There is a large amount of land that can be used for the intended purpose. There is a decreasing amount of land for ohv use, especially in California.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section of 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1570

**Last Name** McCain

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Gentleman I believe that in the very near future any acquisition of said lands "Johnson Valley" will be a costly error. The bill proposed by Senator Dianne Feinstein will fail in 2011 as it did in 2010. You the Department of the Navy/United States Government surely have dominance over the lust of one Senator's grandiose plans to dominate public land. In my opinion She intends to create the Worlds most costly loss to public recreation. Reclaiming this land from the military is not necessary. I am a private pilot, and aircraft owner. I know of the airspace that is needed for your maneuvers. Flying over public land is of little objection, however do not agree that the land itself is need for ground maneuvers. This area is far more important as open recreation area that will only be realized once it is Closed to public use. If more land is needed I suggest you look in directions away from Johnson Valley. Thank You Michael McCain

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section of 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training

requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1571

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability. Ken Reitsma

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1572  
**Last Name** Purdum  
**First Name** Greg  
**Comment** Do not close Johnson valley from my families use  
**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1573  
**Last Name** Lampman  
**First Name** Douglas  
**Comment** I was thinking that you could leave the riding area open to the public while you train as this would be close to real life war encounters were the civilians are in the war zone.  
**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1574  
**Last Name** Harte  
**First Name** David

**Comment** While my son and daughter were growing we frequented Johnson Valley and Stoddard Wells for camping. Now grown, when Scott returns from Australia yearly he wants to ride with dad and I usually tell him that the California desert is no longer as open as when he last visited and we may have to travel out of state or find something other than the wide open spaces to enjoy. Last year I finally went to Pismo Beach with him but that's quite a drive and not as enjoyable as our Calif deserts used to be. Please consider this land as increasingly valuable for family recreation and not closed to those who need the freedom to spend with families and friends enjoying the relaxation in this increasingly busy State

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1575

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I have an objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 10 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Boone road and Giant rock , where we engage in such activities as camping with friends and family, off roading. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 600 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 500 in the

Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses fuel station and c store in barstow, restaurant at the intersection coming down the hill into lucerne from barstow, food for less in barstow, denny's too(), among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Dave Martin 702 682 5991

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1576

**Last Name** casper

**First Name** adam

**Comment** please re-consider taking our land...its all we have left. we have been pushed out and out and out....now we stand to loose that to.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1577

**Last Name** Thompson

**First Name** Jo Ann

**Comment** Please save JV for the citizens use! The community cannot just find a similar place to recreate, surely the military can find another way to get done what they need to get done. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/6/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

1578

**Last Name**

Johns

**First Name**

John

**Comment**

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current

levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area a few times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ \$ 300.00 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200.00 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative" would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1579

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Roger

**Comment** For the below reasons and many others, this land must be maintained as public access land: The recreating public has enjoyed the open expanses of the Johnson Valley for at least the past 50 years. Located in San Bernardino County, California, this 189,000 acre open area is the largest remaining area of public land in the Western United States, and current estimates are that 800,000-1,000,000 visitors recreate throughout the area annually. Activities currently enjoyed include traditional family camping and Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreating, motorcycle and 4x4 competitions, rock hounding, hiking and wildlife viewing. In addition, the open landscape has made the area popular with the film industry. Johnson Valley presents an unparalleled landscape for the OHV enthusiast. It is punctuated by steep red mountains, rolling hills, open valleys, dry lakebeds and sandy washes. Elevations range from 2,300 feet at Melville Dry Lake to 4,600 feet at Hartwell Hills. The eastern boundary is shared with the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Air-Ground Combat Center. It is used for everything from competitive racing events to casual family OHV recreation, gem and mineral collecting, rocketry, land sailing and dispersed camping. No other designated "open" area in the California desert, or indeed the entire United States, provides such a variety of recreational opportunities to the general public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1580

**Last Name** Oinas

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** There is no reason to close of more of the California desert and designate it for other use. We already have a limited area that is protected for no good reason. The military, any branch has ample territory for training. It has been sufficient since General Patton was using the already military area of California desert and it is sufficient now. Stop the removal of our individual freedoms!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1581

**Last Name** Bigwood

**First Name** Michele

**Comment** There is no reason to close of more of the California desert and designate it for other use. We already have a limited area that is protected for no good reason. The military, any branch has ample territory for training. It has been sufficient since General Patton was using the already military area of California desert and it is sufficient now. Stop the removal of our individual freedoms!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1582

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Cooperation is the key to successful relationships. The goal should be to find common ground where each user can attain their desired goals. Many examples of military and civilian cooperation exist. One in particular here in Arizona is the Barry Goldwater Range which is open to outdoor recreation as well with some regulations and restrictions. It doesn't have to be a one-sided decision, opportunities for cooperation exist.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1583

**Last Name** Thom

**First Name** David

**Comment** My family and I ride our offroad motorcycles from a friend's home in Landers. We ride on the land adjacent to the Base and are opposed to the expansion of the base to take over much of the Johnson Valley OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1584

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1585

**Last Name** McDuell

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** My neighbors and I live in VERY close proximity to the proposed expansion. We are retired and do not have the luxury of being able to move. Expanding the Marine base into our "backyard" will ruin our quality of life and destroy what property value we have left. I have not received any mail about the proposed expansion, so I assume my neighbors haven't either. If they had, I'm sure you would be hearing from them as well. Two of my neighbors are Veterans, I know one is decorated (Silver Star), they will also be directly effected if the expansion proceeds. My wife recently passed away, my home is all I have left. I have 3 dogs that are deathly afraid of loud noises. Retirement to the peaceful quiet desert is now in extreme jeopardy. Please reconsider this expansion for the sake of us most effected. I've been told that some of the expansion plans would not effect home owners, why not select one of those alternatives? Thank you, Paul McDuell

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1586

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern: I think your idea to expand into the Johnson Valley, CA is a poor one. I am not a hardcore off-roader, but was dating one last year and had the privilege to participate in some of the major races and activities sponsored down in that area. And the people eagerly welcomed me into their community. I have seen the community the off-roading sport has cultivated, and the Johnson Valley is like the mecca of the land available to them, and there's not much land left for their use. This community offers a safe, clean, respectful environment for youth to get involved, as well as men and women of all ages, and I think they are owed our support and respect in return. We should enable, not hinder, this type of community to continue to grow and flourish.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1587

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This land needs to remain public. OUR CHILDREN DESERVE TO HAVE OPEN LANDS. The Marine Corps can blow up land elsewhere.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson

Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1588

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We are writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 4-5 times a year and have been doing so for over 25 years. this is a great location for us living in the greater Los Angeles area to get out a spend quality family time. We spend \$200-\$300 each trip benefiting the local economy with fuel and groceries. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Steve, Sue, Madison and Mitchell Buckley

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1589

**Last Name** Sobchik

**First Name** Ronald

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. Noise study only includes existing conditions, needs to be redone under some purposed possible scenarios and boundaries, much more work needs to be done. You have presented no real explanation of how you will keep any "dud producing" explosive ordinance out of the restricted public use area (alt 5 & 6), a new fail safe system needs to be developed to prevent miss-loading and improper release of explosive ordinance in the wrong areas. The No action alternative was not on display at the last three public meetings, those three meetings need to be held over again with the no action alternative clearly on display. Finally, given the immense size of the DEIS presented and the complexity of the issues, the public needs an extension of the public comment period in order to prepare a proper response to the impact the expansion of the base will have on the surrounding areas, especially the local economy and environment.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of

the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS). If acquired lands were transferred back to public domain, the Marine Corps would be required to comply with range closure procedures (USEPA 40 CFR Part 300), Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA), Base Realignment and Closure Policies (BRAC), Reporting Hazardous Substance Activity When Selling or Transferring Federal Real Property (40 CFR Part 373), and Defense Environmental Restoration Program (DERP) (10 USC 2701). . The No Action alternative is discussed and analyzed in relation to each subject area (please see Chapter 4 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Please see other sections of chapter 4 for information on other environmental impacts.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1590

**Last Name** Baldwin

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Please do not take away the access to the Johnson Valley ORV area. It has provide me and my family with a lifetime of memories and we love it dearly. Having worked at 29 Palms during operational manuevers I have seen the total destruction of the area and to destroy this beautiful area we enjoy to use for camping and hiking, enjoying it's natural beauty of the indigenous flora and fauna. I beg to to reconsider using it for military use. Thank-you,

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1591

**Last Name** Hicks

**First Name** James

**Comment** please see attached. thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response**

**Comment ID: 1591 (Page 1 of 1)**

I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered.

From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities.

My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 5-6 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are means dry lake, where we engage in such activities as ohv riding and hiking.

When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 250-350 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 150 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses 241 café, local mini marts and gas stations, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area:

If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site.

As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative.

Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

James Hicks  
949-770-6348

**Response to Comment 1591 (Page 1 of 1):**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1592

**Last Name** Sira

**First Name** Jesse

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area several times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are The Hammers and Camp Rock Road , where we engage in such activities as Jeeping and motorcycling, as well as just camping. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$200+ on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$100+ in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the various businesses in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced

recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1593

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I do not wish for the US Government to expand it's solely exclusive use of land in the Mojave Desert. The US Government owns 85% of the entire state of Nevada. That's enough for one quadrant of the country. As an avid motorcyclist and outdoorsman, I frequent the land involved in this decision and I thoroughly reject the premise that the US Military needs to expand its grip on publicly used land in the Southwest US. The single ideology that I would be supportive of involving the removal of the public from ANY more land in the Southwest US would be for the generation of energy from alternative resources (ie: solar, wind, geothermal). Other than that, the US Military has too large a stranglehold on the Southwest US as it is!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1594

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 6 times a year. We engage in such activities as rock-hounding, motorcycling, hiking, and camping. When preparing for a trip, we spend nearly \$500.00 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$100-300 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses Peggy Sue's Diner, hotels, Big Boy, Mad Greek, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced

recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1595

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** email address updated....

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1596

**Last Name** Katz

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** PLEASE dont take away our dezert land that I have used with my family for the last 34 years. I have a son due in August and I would like to enjoy the dezert with him when he's old enough to be in the dirt.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1597

**Last Name** Crawford

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Please consider the economic and social impact of allowing the closure of the Johnson Valley off road area for military training. Personally I have been riding and racing in Johnson Valley since 1968. My family and I currently ride in Johnson Valley at least once a month or more. I have in the past spent two to three weeks per month riding and racing there. The continuous closing of off road areas for recreational riding has severely impacted family lifestyle we have enjoyed for over 40 years. The very least the military should do if they are intent on removing this land from public use is to trade an equal amount of land from current military holdings. NOt a good solution but makes the loss of Johnson Valley a more palatable option. Thanks for listening, Paul Crawford

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The Draft EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1598

**Last Name** Schusteer

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability. Thank you, Joe Schuster

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and

sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1599

**Last Name** Evans

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 7-8 times a year. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 200-500 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 8-900 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently

serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1600

**Last Name** Herring

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** I am against the land expansion. See attached comments.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1601

**Last Name** Marinkovich

**First Name** John

**Comment** It was just a few years ago the environmentalist were telling us that our race area needed managing due to the tortoise and other critters. Now your telling us that 80 ton tanks are just fine, exploding ammunition is ok and that this is all in the interest of our freedoms. What good is freedom when the government takes away your fun time areas, what good is freedom when the government can just walk in and do as it pleases under the camouflage of liberty, what good is freedom when the government left hand does not know what the right hand is doing. How can dirt bikers be this environmental evil on one day, then the next day, with the environmentally correct military in the following day with its arsenal, please who B.S. who. 1. Where is the offer for other areas to be open up to the OHV racing? 2. Is going to be one for one, acre for acre? Is going to be pieced up into small area here and there? 3. You have taken Rainbow basin, now you're taking Johnson valley, why not take some of the wilderness lands? Fair is fair. This is simply not fair, it only benefits the military establishment and the people who make money off of them. Eisenhower warned us that this would happen, his words are over 60 years old and he understood that absolute power corrupts absolutely. In short, do not take Johnson valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The Draft EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1602

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Additionally, the amount of OHV recreation area continues to decline throughout the west while the OHV population increases. This pushes more people into smaller areas. This density creates safety concerns, more traffic on the same patch of land, and a very unpleasant family adventure/camping experience. The number of people that visit Johnson Valley is staggering. Your proposal would force these families to other already overcrowded OHV areas. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for

OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1603
<b>Last Name</b>	Cano
<b>First Name</b>	Christopher
<b>Comment</b>	Please don't shut down or take any land from this place my club and i enjoy these grounds at Johnson valley, its the really only place where we can have our fun with such diversity in skill level and is trip we all look forward to taking those trails. its the perfect family OHV.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/7/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1604
<b>Last Name</b>	Romwell
<b>First Name</b>	Shawn
<b>Comment</b>	Please don't take away one of our favorite places to ride we have so few left and loose more ground every day
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1605

**Last Name** Johanson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Please refrain from closing any public land in the Johnson Valley area. It is a widely used area for off roading that my family has enjoyed for years. Public riding areas in California are becoming more scarce and forces too many people into smaller riding areas which in turn causes injuries and deaths.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1606

**Last Name** Griffith

**First Name** Clint

**Comment** I live In Lucerne Valley. Evory weekend people from all over the USA and the world filter through my town to visit Johnson Valley. Buying gas, ice, food, and drinks. This town depends on these people for revenue. Our bums pick up there cans for income. With out them our shops will close up and our bums will lose there source of income, creating thievery, robbery and ruining our town.

**Date Comment Received** 5/7/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process

**Comment ID** 1607

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 5 times a year. We visit Johnson Valley to engage in such activities as 4 wheeling and Motorcycle riding. When preparing for a trip, we spend a few hundred on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$300 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses (names of business), among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of

it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1608

**Last Name** Hack

**First Name** John

**Comment** Your statement to explain the justification for the land grab as the need to be able to have 3 battalions conduct 72 hour training. I live in Oceanside and

today (5/7/11) you just completed the type of training exercise you describe in as impossible to do anywhere in the United States at Camp Pendleton, only 70 miles from MCAGCC. Despite the fact that MCAGCC has nearly 1000 sq. miles of land and is in a remote area the Marine Corps conducted the exercise on Pendleton a base with less than 200 sq. miles. Pendleton has a great amount of infrastructure so the training areas are proportionally much smaller than MCAGCC. It is in the middle of hundreds of thousands of people. Marines fired more than 1300 high explosive artillery rounds and over 30 rockets less than 4 miles from homes. The EPA Toxic Release Inventory proves that for every 6 rounds of artillery fired by the Marines at Pendleton and MCAGCC, 5 are fired at Camp Pendleton. Marines do not utilize the base now. Training for deployment is done at Pendleton so Marines can go home at night. Weeks will go by with no training at MCAGCC while Marines train at Camp Pendleton about 340 days a year. The noise advisory from Camp Pendleton proves this. I will be happy to provide prove of this. MCAGCC is already the largest base in the united States. The Army conducts their training of this type on a smaller base just north of MCAGCC. The fact that Marines want to take land enjoyed by millions of people to sit idle is atrocious. Local area residents will lose the use of an area that has become an important recreational area. This is akin to removing the ski area from residents of Aspen. The land also provides an important source of income for local area residents. Vehicle repair, food sales, and accommodation rentals are important sources of income for local residents. Does the Marines plan to compensate area residents? After the horrible experience perpetrated by the Marines Corps on residents in my area I can attest to the fact that the intense noise and vibration causes acute stress disorder. It is a most disruptive and invasive experience. I would not wish it on anyone. The exercise over the last three day had the Marine Corps fire over 1300 high explosive artillery rounds. We experiences 3 days of weapon discharges 24 hours a day. I have had no sleep in 3 days. This conduct is an extreme health hazard as well as a humiliation to have the sanctity of your home breached in such an awful manner. My small dog has not eaten in 3 days and shakes constantly. I invite you over to see this first hand. In conclusion there is no reason to grant the Marine Corp access to this land. The sectary of defense has stated the Marine Corp will experience a reduction and become more ship bound. "we do not need two armies", he said. "The Marines do not need this land" I say John Hack

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and

maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1609
<b>Last Name</b>	Jones
<b>First Name</b>	wayne
<b>Comment</b>	To whom it may concern, Johnson Vally is one of our greatest recreational areas due to its size and variety of terrain in California. My family and I have enjoyed riding motor cycles there for over 45 years. It's wonderful to go out for a weekend and see all the people camped out and enjoying the area in their own ways. Personally I love to explore and there is a lot of that there to do. It,s too bad you couldn't make a corr adore to Fort Irwin and train with them. Sincerely Wayne Jones
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1610

**Last Name** DeWan

**First Name** Evan

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. I am a former United States Marine and am fully sympathetic with the desire to have adequate training facilities to ensure our Marines are combat ready. However, I have been to Marine Corps facilities with vast amounts of land that sit idle and the public (you, me, and all US citizens) is denied access to. It is time for a reduction in the size and expense of our government, this includes the acquisition and continued funding of MORE (everything). Act responsibly and take the lead on reducing the crippling deficit and the mantra of "more, more, more". My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area at least twice per year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley and we typically stay in Apple Valley and/or Victorville. We are motorcyclists and have been since the 1960s. When preparing for a trip, we spend hundreds of dollars on fuel, groceries, and

other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional few hundred in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized many businesses in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Semper fi, Evan T DeWan, former Sergeant of Marines

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1611

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Alternative #3, leave 100% of Johnson Valley open 12 months out of the year. This land belongs to the public and must stay as public land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1612

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Alternative #3, leave 100% of Johnson Valley open 12 months out of the year. This land belongs to the public and must stay as public land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1613

**Last Name** Boring

**First Name** Bruce

**Comment** Please do not allow this land to be taken by the military. There are other places in our Country that could be used, that are not such popular

destinations for the public. As an off-road and enthusiast and desert lover, I strongly object to the land-grab contemplated here! This is not a good use for our popular desert!

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1614

**Last Name** Richardson

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** Please leave our desert alone. We know the military services have areas all over this country that can be used for training purposes and they do not need more. How about area 51? They claim to not have anything there. How about we get out of the middle east. Then mind our own business. lets stop trying to police the whole world. Do what needs to be done and then go home. Beside that, we are bankrupt already.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1615

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID**

1616

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of

reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1617

**Last Name** Nardi

**First Name** Tony

**Comment** Johnson Valley is the most awesome panoramic desert opportunity to visit and recreate. What a gain for the military if you consume all of it. What a lose for the public. I object to the land acquisition and the negative economic impact it will have on the surrounding communities. I support the 'no action' alternative. My family and I recreate 5 to 6 times per year in Johnson valley. I go there with my OHV buds 20 times per year. We camp at cougar buttes at camp rock road, the rock pile and anderson dry lake at bessimer mine road and sometime travel by ohv to boone road. We love to ride atvs and motorcycles. Over the years we usually stop off at Letty's for late lunch on the way back home to simi valley.If Johnson Valley is closed to the public then where do we ride or drive our ohv?Why expand into an area thats already useful to thousands of people per year. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the projects potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent visitor to J.V. To suggest that the proposed project, including the preferred alternative, would result in anything other than significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading. This part of the DEIS must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the no action alternative. How can the base be expanded when other bases are being closed due lack of monies. Thank you, Tony Nardi simi valley, ca.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1618

**Last Name** VanLeer

**First Name** Richard W.

**Comment** I DONT KNOW WHY THE MARINES CAN NOT GO TO FORT IRWIN FOR THESE MANUVERS THERE IS PLENTY OF UNUSED LAND OUYSIDE OF BARSTOW, CA.OR WHY THEY CANT GO NORTH EAST OF 29 PALMS FOR THESE MANUEVERS AND TRAINING. OFF ROADERS HAVE BEEN PICKED ON BY GOVERMENT AGENCIES FOR YEARS, AND LAND HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM US FOR MANY YEARS, THEY RAISE OUR OFFROAD GREEN FEES BY 100 PERCENT AND THEN ASK TO BORROW THE MONEY THAT IS WRONG.OFF ROAD MONEY IS NEEDED IN THESE CITYS THAT OFFROADERS SPEND WHEN THERE FAMILYS GO OUT FOR THE WEEKEND I HAVE BEEN OFFROADING FOR OVER 40 YEARS, FIGHTING FOR THE BARSTOW TO LAS VEGAS RACE AGAINST SEN. FIENSTIEN AND HER FOLLOWERS.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost

sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1619

**Last Name** VanLeer

**First Name** Richard W.

**Comment** I DONT KNOW WHY THE MARINES CAN NOT GO TO FORT IRWIN FOR THESE MANUVERS THERE IS PLENTY OF UNUSED LAND OUYSIDE OF BARSTOW, CA.OR WHY THEY CANT GO NORTH EAST OF 29 PALMS FOR THESE MANUEVERS AND TRAINING. OFF ROADERS HAVE BEEN PICKED ON BY GOVERMENT AGENCIES FOR YEARS, AND LAND HAS BEEN TAKEN FROM US FOR MANY YEARS, THEY RAISE OUR OFFROAD GREEN FEES BY 100 PERCENT AND THEN ASK TO BORROW THE MONEY THAT IS WRONG.OFF ROAD MONEY IS NEEDED IN THESE CITYS THAT OFFROADERS SPEND WHEN THERE FAMILYS GO OUT FOR THE WEEKEND I HAVE BEEN OFFROADING FOR OVER 40 YEARS, FIGHTING FOR THE BARSTOW TO LAS VEGAS RACE AGAINST SEN. FIENSTIEN AND HER FOLLOWERS.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a

direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1620

**Last Name** Snyder

**First Name** Wayne

**Comment** At the "open house" held at Ontario High School, the claim was repeatedly made that this site is essential to properly train our troops for fighting in Afghanistan. When asked if this means the marines are planning on staying and fighting in Afghanistan for many years if this is the main justification, a representative response was that "situations around the world are always changing, just look at the sudden events in Japan." In other words, the representatives were trying to justify the public land grab by citing any crisis in the world, regardless whether it has any relevance to the climate, type of land, etc. The argument of similarities in climate and land, particularly when they are put forth as this is the only possible site, are clearly an attempt to make up justifications for the removal of public land from the public domain.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1621

**Last Name** Snyder

**First Name** Wayne

**Comment** At the open house, one report claimed to look at effect on public use. This report detailed the exact acreage involved in each plan. This is not an acceptable report on the effect of public use. There was no data quantifying looking at questions such as what the number of people who use the land yearly?, What is the number of families?, What is the total number of people-hours?, What is the predicted effect on the user when involving the removal of a major family recreation area?, How does a successful recreation area such as this help keep kids off of drugs, out of gangs, away from urban street gangs, etc. And also there are the economic effects, both for the area and for the various industries throughout southern California. An environmental impact study should look at the public effects, the economic effects, and the psychological and sociological effects of the action, not just a bunch of land maps with acres listed.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1622

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I use this area for offroading and family gathering several times a year. Unless this area is replaced square foot for square foot with equal riding area it will be a great loss to the community.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1623

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family uses this area as a low cost vacation area. In these hard economic times the elimination or reduction of this area will have a devastating effect on families for generations to come. Please expand the base in the opposite direction and stop being afraid of senator Boxer.

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1624

**Last Name** Saldana

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** My Father introduced us to Johnson valley when I was a kid, Now me, friends and family take our families there atleast ten times a year. Its the only place were the kids can ride without being run down by others due to overcrowding. If johnson valley is taken from us, everybody will have to cram into smaller areas like stoddard wells, el mirage and gorman. Lucerne Valley, Hesperia will definately feel the impact, im sure there economy will suffer greatly. I believe there livelyhoods out weigh 6000 troops running around the desert. Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1625

**Last Name** Stockstell

**First Name** Carol

**Comment** Don't take any more of California's public land. We already have very few areas open to off-road recreation, and the Johnson Valley OHV area is one of the most popular. The people of California have already relinquished so much of our land to the Feds and the state for "protection." While not completely opposed to protecting areas as wilderness, how much is enough? The same goes for our military bases. How much is enough? People who enjoy off-road recreation are citizens, too. The land belongs to us, too! We need to share it and the Johnson Valley OHV area is a perfect compromise. The military base needs to head east. I truly hope our comments are being considered in this matter!

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1626

**Last Name** Stockstell

**First Name** Carol

**Comment** The negative economic impact of closing the Johnson Valley OHV area and surrounding towns will be substantial. In a time of declining revenue, these communities cannot withstand this kind of hit. Having the base expansion head east will be a better alternative, if the expansion is needed at all. The homeowners in Johnson Valley also deserve consideration regarding this land acquisition. What about their rights! The Marine base needs to stay out of Johnson Valley!

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small

businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1627

**Last Name** Talli

**First Name** Marles

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. I grew up riding motorcycles in the Lucene Valley area. It was an opportunity for our family to do something together we all loved. My Father has passed on but my Mother still lives in the area, and my brother owns property in the area. We were just speaking of how much off road riding has been taken away from us. My brothers son, just one short generation behind me, does not have the same opportunities we had as children. This is unacceptable. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. I have recently began riding dirt bikes again and was so looking forward to taking my husband and son out to ride where I grew up and learned to ride myself. This would include spending money in the local community as many others do who currently recreate here. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others,

must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Marles Talli

**Date Comment Received** 5/8/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1628

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain

Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1629

**Last Name** Becker

**First Name** William

**Comment** I am AGAINST the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center proposed base expansion and restricting OHV access at the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area. I have a LOT OF FAMILY that lives in the San Diego AREA and we use it a lot.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1630

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close down Johnson Valley. I can not support the DEIS report as it is inaccurate and puts in jeopardy the well-being of local businesses and offroad enthusiasts state wide. I have been enjoying Johnson Valley for over twenty years with family and friends. We spend on average around \$500 dollars every trip we make there. We spend on average, six 4 day trips throughout the year. We visit a variety of local businesses for food, supplies, parts and recreational enjoyment. We ride a variety of offroad vehicles and shoot biodegradable clays for sport. The time spent at Johnson Valley OHV has been by far one of the most important activities that has bonded my family and provided for a strong moral upbringing for all those involved. If the land is removed from public access it will not only be bad for the local economy but also it will fracture the hearts and souls of the majority of us that visit and have a profound love for this recreational area. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative,"

would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Chris S. Holmes

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1631

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable

proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability Thanks, Dan Ratliff

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment.

See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1632

**Last Name** Shatwell

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** Please do not take Johnson Valley from us, we have enjoyed this open land for decades. Every time we go out there we stop in Lucerne and spend alot of money in the Lucerne market. Like thousands of others, if Johnson Valley is closed we will not be going there anymore. Very sad.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1633

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Need to keep it open. It's the right thing to do!

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1634

**Last Name** Paolini

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** Please don't take our off road get away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1635

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take the OHV land that I've been vacationing on all my life. OHV areas have become so limited since I was a child myself. I want my grandchildren to enjoy motorsports as I did. Johnson Valley is so close to the basin where I live that it is relatively inexpensive for us to vacation there and can be used for just a weekend trip, this means a lot since my husband's pay was cut last year. I just want my kids and grandkids to have easy vacation opportunities as we do. Gas prices just don't allow us to go further out anymore.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1636

**Last Name** Frantz

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 4 times a year. Our favorite place to visit is Johnson Valley, where we engage in such activities as 4 wheeling and rock crawling. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$500 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in

conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1637

**Last Name** McKinley

**First Name** Jess

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area at least 8 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are The Hammers, Soggy Dry Lake, and the Rock Pile where we engage in such activities as trials riding, motorcycle riding, and geology hikes. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$250 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$500 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized many restaurants, shops, and convenience stores in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the

significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1638

**Last Name** Taylor

**First Name** Leslie

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. I visit the Johnson Valley OHV area between 16-20 times a year. Our favorite place to visit in Johnson Valley is the OHV area, where we engage in such activities as shooting and riding dirt bikes. With gas as expensive as it is, it is already difficult to find close areas to ride! Having to drive 2-3 hours from Orange County is bad enough. I hate the track. I like

to enjoy the outdoors and the quiet and peace that the desert brings you get to escape all the people and traffic and unwind. One of my favorite things about this area is that you can camp next to rock formations that provide both wind protection and beautiful surroundings. You cannot get that at Stoddard Wells or Four Corners. If you are going to take land, please take land that people don't already enjoy!!! There is plenty of it why restrict land that is being used responsibly for family recreation and also boosts the CA economy? When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 200 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 100 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area at local gas stations and food establishments in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. I would probably travel south to Ocotillo Wells, which is already a heavily used area or start spending my weekends in Mexico where I am not saddled with regulations and fees like I am in CA. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is incorrect. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised, so I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1639

**Last Name** Taylor

**First Name** Leslie

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. I visit the Johnson Valley OHV area between 16-20 times a year. Our favorite place to visit in Johnson Valley is the OHV area, where we engage in such activities as shooting and riding dirt bikes. With gas as expensive as it is, it is already difficult to find close areas to ride! Having to drive 2-3 hours from Orange County is bad enough. I hate the track. I like to enjoy the outdoors and the quiet and peace that the desert brings'you get to escape all the people and traffic and unwind. One of my favorite things about this area is that you can camp next to rock formations that provide both wind protection and beautiful surroundings. You cannot get that at Stoddard Wells or Four Corners. If you are going to take land, please take land that people don't already enjoy!!! There is plenty of it'why restrict land that is being used responsibly for family recreation and also boosts the CA economy? When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 200 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 100 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area at local gas stations and food establishments in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. I would probably travel south to Ocotillo Wells, which is already a heavily used area or start spending my weekends in Mexico where I am not saddled with regulations and fees like I am in CA. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long- standing

visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is incorrect. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised, so I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thanks.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1640

**Last Name** Garrison

**First Name** Nevin

**Comment** As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1641

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please stay off our land you still have plenty of land to bomb. We need some where to play. What you are proposing is not good for the enviroment and will do way more damage than the motorcycles and atv's that ride the area

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The EIS evaluates geological impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.12 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there would be less than significant impacts to soils from military vehicle operations, ordnance delivery, and infantry training.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1642
<b>Last Name</b>	Johnston
<b>First Name</b>	Carlos
<b>Comment</b>	<p>I would respectfully ask the EIS to consider the "No Action" alternative to expanding the base. More and more OHV users are being squeezed in to a smaller and smaller space and this causes more wear and tear to the available land. I travel to Johnson Valley to ride off road about 6 times a year. Some times friends and family camp out there and we have a great time. Some times we stay at hotels in Apple Valley. I am sure that if this area were to be shut down or access reduced, there would be a significant negative effect to the local economy. Please choose the NO ACTION alternative. Respectfully Carlos Johnston</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/9/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p> <p>Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

**Comment ID** 1643

**Last Name** Molinari

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family has owned 5 acres in Johnson Valley since 1970 & we recreate in the Johnson Valley OHV area throughout the year. The third generation of family & friends are now enjoying many trips to our property for great family fun & camping which is now in jeopardy with this proposal. Many of our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley have already been closed and designated as "Wilderness Areas" like the jeep trails into the mountains leading to "Willie Boys" gravesite which is a historic spot in the area's history. We now have been restricted into riding in the OHV open area which is getting more & more crowded due to the closing of other riding areas. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 500-\$1000 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 200-\$300 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area on a normal weekend trip. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses in Pioneer Town, Landers gas stations & mini-marts, Johnson Valley Association, Yucca Valley hardware, Victorville area gas station/auto parts stores/restaurants -too many to name, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be little reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert and our property value would be desimated. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I

can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1644

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. In addition, the Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives and has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. Also, the arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the

proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1645

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have used this area for the past 40 years. I have used it for camping offroading and racing. I have taken my family out and would like to see it still available for my grand children to use and enjoy. If this is taken away from us it will have a very negitive impact economicly on several companies that make thier living on motorcycle and jeep accesories. As if we need any more unemployment. I realy like to see that this area to stay open for future generations.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1646

**Last Name** Olsen

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** i have been riding and racing Johnson Valley since the late 70's. since the land was established as an ohv area I assumed it would be there for future generations of offroaders.Now that the recreational lands are getting squeezed into ever smaller areas it almost looks like the possible end to a sport that my family and I have loved doing for years.It would be nice if other areas not designated for ohv were considered.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1647

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into the Johnson Valley OHV Area. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family goes to the Johnson Valley OHV area several times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Soggy Dry Lake and Means Dry Lake, where we camp and take the quads and motorcycles on weekends. We also enjoy the off-road races and the rock crawling competitions held at the Johnson Valley OHV area. When preparing for a trip, we spend hundreds of dollars on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an hundreds more in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses: B and B Cycles; Victorville Motorcycle Center; Lucerne Valley Market, among many others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty- nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced

recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1648

**Last Name** Nuss

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area at least thirty times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Mean dry lake bed, Rock pile, Red Hill, Soggy Dry lake bed and all points in between, where we engage in such activities as Rock hounding, hiking riding motorcycles both for pleasure and competition. There are other times we just go out and enjoy the solitude of the desert. My family consists of three generations that currently use the Johnson Valley area, with a total of six generations that have made this area a destination point for years. The US government has closed down increasingly more and more land for the public to use for recreation, with no alternates. Johnson Valley is the last large piece of land left to provide safe recreation. With the use of public land increased, it makes no sense to be taking away more land and crowding such a large population into a postage stamp sized area. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 400.00 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$400.00 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses, Lucerne Valley market, Union 76 gas station, Letty restaurant, Hiway 247

restaurant, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long- standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only suppo

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1649

**Last Name** Burkhart

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-

related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area two times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are off of Bessemer Mine road , where we engage in such activities as Motorcycling and UTV touring. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 300.00 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 150.00 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses (names of business), among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long- standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1650

**Last Name** Best

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** My family and friends camp at least a dozen times a year in and around Johnson Valley. We spend at least 350 dollars each trip, fuel and food. That doesn't count vehicle repairs. I vote no action on EIS. We've been using this area since the 70's

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1651

**Last Name** Wagner

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** I'm writing regarding the land grab oF the Johnson Valley OHV and camping area. My family and I have been going to this area for many years. We have enjoyed the camping hiking and OHV trails. There are not many of these area's left in CA to go to. It would be a shame for this area to be taken away. My kids learned to ride there, I broke my first bone there at the age of 60, my foot, my wife turned in front of me. I forgave her. Please find another area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1652

**Last Name** Tesh

**First Name** Martin

**Comment** I have studied the options at several meetings and the option that is missing is NONE OF THE ABOVE.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1653

**Last Name** Kudlick

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** I have been off road motorcycling in Johnson Valley since 1985. I fully support the need to train our Marines but also believe that the Johnson Valley Off Road Vehicle riding area is essential to Southern California. As I am sure you are aware the areas in Southern California for people to recreate with off road vehicles has been shrinking year after year since I started riding in California. Many of the areas that are left have already been reduced in size. Most of the areas have become too small to be able to hold off road riding events for large groups of people. Such as races and organized charity rides. I am a member of Ventura County Motorcycle Club where we have participated in putting on many events in Johnson Valley over the years. Taking Johnson Valley Off Road Vehicle riding area is just not acceptable for any reason. There is no replacement land in Southern California and the answer being provided is tough luck. This is a large community of law abiding recreationist trying to use what little land we

have left for our events. But for the marines there are alternatives. Since they seem to be looking for areas to do this practice for just a couple of months a year I would think there are federal lands they could use that are just as suitable as Johnson Valley. I just look north to the neighboring state of Nevada where there is the Nevada Test Site and the Nevada Testing and Training Range. I believe that the Marines could carve out time at these sites to do this kind of training and have enough land to do it in. I would have to believe the air rights for restricted flight has already been arranged with the FAA. I also believe that this area also offers almost identical terrain to the Johnson Valley area. It also offers similar temperate elevations, and humidity. From owning vacation homes in Henderson NV I know the Air Force also hold major training events a couple of times a year out there. It does seem that the two forces could coordinate training schedules so they can both independently conduct large scale training exercises on this land in Nevada. This is just one out of the box solution and I am sure there are many more. It seems that the Marines want their own very large testing area that they only use part time for major training. And yet the Air Force has it's own very large testing area it also only uses part time for major training. Sharing makes the most sense all away around and the only way it does not make sense is if the Maries feel slighted because they have to use an Air Force Base to conduct their training. One way to solve that is make the Nevada Test Range a joint Air force and Marine test facility not only in use but also in running the facility.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1654

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Choose option "alternative 3" for the Marine Corps training area. There is no where to put a new OHV, but there is avialable land for the Marine Corps. Why not use the National Training Center at Ft. Irwin for the Marine exercises?

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestion for a project alternative. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered this and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1655

**Last Name** Lanciaux

**First Name** Marc

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that

is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public.. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of

the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1656

**Last Name** Peterson

**First Name** Jay

**Comment** As an active user of Johnson Valley and given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the

EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1657
<b>Last Name</b>	Adan
<b>First Name</b>	Richard
<b>Comment</b>	The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/9/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 1658

**Last Name** Camerano

**First Name** James

**Comment** As an avid off-roader I am not happy that the military is trying to take away many acres of public land that has been used by many fellow off-roaders. Please DO NOT take this land away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1659

**Last Name** Camerano

**First Name** James

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other

services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1660

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** GO EAST!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1661

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I've got two concerns dealing with the land acquisition the Marine Corps has proposed. My first concern deals with the off road community. I'm sure those who will make the final decision have heard this, but it truly is a concern of mine. When the government passed the Desert Protection Act, they closed off a very large area of the California Mojave to the off road community. The largest area to ride off road is Johnson Valley. The land acquisition will basically cut this area in half. In doing this, the remaining land will become even more saturated resulting in an overuse of the remaining trails. Our current elected officials have said there will not be any other land opened to off roaders. At this point, I feel the off road community has done nothing but give (or have taken away), with nothing returned. My second concern comes as a land owner. My family owns twenty acres within two miles of Johnson Valley OHV. We've had enough problems with the local unique characters (trespassing, break ins, property stolen, even squatters) of Lucerne Valley. I have a very real concern for what would become of our property if (when) the land acquisition occurs. With Johnson Valley being so large, the only real traffic we see from off roaders are those riding towards Stoddard Valley. With more traffic, I'm concerned with those who may see our property and see what we have. There are those in every community (not just off-road) who will break in and take what they want. We've had this problem when squatters neighboring on neighboring properties would have friends over, and I'm afraid it will be even worse with more traffic near our property.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The

EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 1662

**Last Name** Hicks

**First Name** B.R.

**Comment** If you must expand why not to the east rather than the west? Common sense would seem to dictate further away from population would be preferable than closer, if nothing else for security reasons.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1663

**Last Name** Chick

**First Name** David

**Comment** As a recreationalist I have spent many years visiting Johnson Valley. It was used by the military for training many years ago and subsequently managed as BLM land. The areas in question are instrumental in the development of skills and memories for our children and thier children to come. The area has a diversity of terrain that is used by off highway and motorcycle users as well as campers and hikers. Please keep this area as it cureently is. Allow the public to continue using this are as we are continously losing our public lands to a diversity of interests. Respectfully, David Chick

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1664

**Last Name** Telepak

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** The DEIS for 29 Palms is severely flawed for reasons below that violate the NEPA process, It should be retracted, redone, and resubmitted. The only alternative I could support at this time would be "No Action". 1) By law NEPA requires a reasonable range of alternatives which the Corps has purposely NOT provided. 2) There is no creditable justification for the requiring simultaneous training of 3 MEBs given the present and anticipated world-wide need for combat capability of this type at this level. 3) It is very damaging and counterproductive not to use the nearby Army facility at Ft. Irwin. One of your officers has been publicly quoted that the Corps prides itself in NOT cooperating with the other services. As a retired Army officer (COL), I find this very offensive, and as an American taxpayer UNacceptable.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a current Marine Corps training requirement. In addition to the high deployment tempo in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Marine Corps must maintain high proficiency for other vital Marine Corps missions, including combined arms maneuver at the MEB level. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the

range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1665

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a resident of the High Desert, I am concerned about the consequences that will directly result as a cause of selling off desert land to the Marines or other military branches. I enjoy hiking on the weekends to Lucerne Valley, Johnson Valley, Yucca Valley, and Joshua Tree National Park freely with my hounds. This land is rich in not only ancient Indian petroglyphs but also in geographical sites and minerals. By turning this land over for private use for the military, residents are risking losing their rights to their own backyard. The High Desert makes a lot of it's income thanks to tourist who come to find peace and refuge from everyday city life as well as seek fun on their motorbikes. If we give up this land mass, we are risking economic trauma. Also the debris caused by military set off is not something too suitable for desert wildlife. The desert tortoise is at risk of extinction and if the citizens don't protect them who will? The military won't- that's for certain. This land is my land as well as it is my neighbors and fellow wildlife. Don't destroy the natural beauty and serenity of our desert ecosystem by exploiting it with missiles and gunfire.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and

direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1666
<b>Last Name</b>	Olson
<b>First Name</b>	Eric
<b>Comment</b>	Dear Sirs or Madam, True multiple-use land is becoming more and more scarce all the time. Please do not take away the Johnson Valley from generations of families who enjoy recreating on this land. Thank you for your consideration, Eric Olson
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/9/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1667

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 2 times a year, where we engage in Or-road motorcycling. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$400 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$250 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses (names of business), among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Respectfully, Scott Dinslage

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for

OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1668

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1669

**Last Name** Saldana

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** It will be very sad day if the land that grew up on riding with my father family and friends. My grandfather first took my dad there when he was young now he takes me. Why this part of the desert, when desert land is so vast across California, Arizona, New Mexico ect. What about the local economies of Lucerne Valley, Apple Valley Victorville and Hesperia. Our riding season starts in September through May and we normally make at least 10 trips to Johnson Valley and every time we buy groceries at the Stater Bros. IN HESPERIA. We also stop to eat, get gas, buy supplies and

other various stuff in town, on the way to Johnson Valley, just like thousands of others. I just dont understand why so much land is needed, how much training can there possibly be in the desert and what the enviroment so much for saving turtles.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1670

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider me and my family apposed to the take over of Johnson Valley and the Hammer trails. I consider this hitting below the belt, I have loved ones in the marines and have supported the armed forces of this country forever, This could change things. We support you and thank you for our freedom and Thank you !! Please dont take our playground that you have fought for us, without Johnson Valley who cares.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1671

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please reconsider your decision to take over land belonging to the Johnson Valley ORV area. Remember: Many Marines families also make extensive use of this land for their own off road vehicle activities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1672

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please choose Option #3. I am an avid off-road enthusiast and any other option would impact my family. I spend up to 15 weekends a year at Johnson Valley with family and friends. This is a public resource that should be enjoyed by the public. Best regards, Nigel Young

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1673

**Last Name** Stanfield

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** Is often the case that fragmented populations can cause a loss of genetic diversity that can cripple vulnerable species to the point of extinction. Our desert ecosystem is more valuable to us to preserve for future generations rather than a substrate for military training. Though the defense of our country is important, a balance must be struck between our national security and the preservation of our most sacred lands.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1674

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** History has shown that water is in short supply in the immediate vicinity of Twentynine Palms. There is no evidence to support the conclusions/hypothesis contained in the document that there will be minimal or no impact to the already existing water supply. 5.3.2.1 Increased Use of Twentynine Palms Valley Groundwater Basin . The TPWD believes that it may be possible to shift additional water production from the Joshua Tree Basin to the Twentynine Palms Valley Basin to stabilize water levels within the Joshua Tree Basin. This pure conjecture, a full study of must be conducted to ascertain the impact to ground water in this area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 5.3.2.1 of the EIS indicates that the Twentynine Palms Water District plans to initiate a study to determine whether or not the District can manage its groundwater basins by shifting supply from the heavily-used Joshua Basin to the less-utilized Twentynine Palms Valley Basin. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1675

**Last Name** pope

**First Name** norm

**Comment** Please don't take over Johnson Valley. We have so little already out there. Perhaps the base can go to a different area? Thank you for fighting for our country and making it possible to enjoy our sport!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and

eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1676

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I DO NOT SUPPORT taking any area from the Johnson Valley OHV area for expanding the Marine base or any other reason. I do support the Marines and if they need more land then we should open current wilderness areas or wilderness study areas for the marines use. Off-highway vehicle users have been "crammed" into the Johnson Valley area after decades of Wilderness designation, administrative closures, and lawsuits that closed millions of acres of the California desert. ALL this area needs to remain open open to OHV use, all the time. More public land needs to be open to the public and ohv use, not less.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1677

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** Senate Bill SB 2921 is referenced in chapter 5. This bill has been introduced by Senator Feinstein but has not moved beyond introduction its inclusion in this DEIS is inappropriate and not germane to this issue. This reference and inclusion must be removed as well as any consideration within the statement

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1678

**Last Name** pope

**First Name** norm

**Comment** Please don't take over Johnson Valley. We have so little already out there. Perhaps the base can go to a different area? Thank you for fighting for our country and making it possible to enjoy our sport!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did

not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1679

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would not like to see any of the Johnson Valley area closed to public use permanently. We go there with our jeep and it is great fun to explore. If closed we would not be able to do that. We also enjoy the area known as the Hammers in the Courgar Buttes area. There are many other trails too. We also go motorcycle riding out off Bessemer Mine Rd. We have gone to many off road & motorcycle races which bring out many people. I feel that these activities are good family fun and help the economy in the High Desert area. Lucerne Valley and several areas benefit from riders and off road enthusiasts stopping to purchase goods or eat at local businesses. There are too many areas being closed to public use. I would like to see the Marines go a different direction and leave Johnson Valley open 100% 12 months a year. East would be a good direction. I understand it is a wilderness area but you can use it for your 2 months and 10 months it can be wilderness again. I also believe that it would be possible to share the Johnson Valley area if 100% is available 10 months out of the year while exercises are not being done. I don't think it is fair to close the area as Alternative 6 suggests. That takes away too much! Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1680

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Did I mention that I really do appreciate the Marines and all the military who are keeping us safe. We do. But I do not think that closing off most of Johnson Valley is wise. I think that too many people enjoy that area for off roading activities and plain family fun. It brings money to the high desert communities. If they have to go elsewhere we lose those dollars. Or people just won't go and no one gets the dollars that would otherwise be spent. Keeping Johnson Valley open 100% 12 months a year would be great. Or at least 100% for 10 months of the year. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/9/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1681

**Last Name** taflin

**First Name** tom

**Comment** Please don't shrink our favorite recreation areas anymore so future generations can recreate there. Also there is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services."

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air- Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB- sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID**

1682

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

Dear US Military Representative, Although I am an extremely supportive of the United States Military, I am concerned about this loss of land for outdoor recreation. I do believe "we" should increase our military training operations, and thus require additional lands to do so, we need to make sure and offset this reduction in public access properties with new venues. Outdoor recreation, motorized and non-motorized, is a critical family activity throughout the United States. We truly are required to maintain these areas of public access, and should keep this a #1 priority. Please have due diligence in providing additional public outdoor recreation lands, if these lands are reallocated for military use, even if it is necessary to acquiring them in surrounding areas. Outdoor recreation is an important mainstay of the US people. Thank you for your review of my letter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1683

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1684

**Last Name** Kolberg

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) is encouraging riders to submit their comments regarding the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center proposed base expansion. This proposed enlargement of the facility could restrict your ability to access the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Area. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. Thank You MIKE :-)

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1685

**Last Name** Burgess

**First Name** Dave

**Comment** My friends and family have been enjoying the area for 50+ years. As the available lands for off road decrease, there is detrimental effects on family life, the local economy and the overall economy. While I am not familiar with the exact needs of the military, I believe that most of the land will be closed to public use with only a small portion actually used by the military. Is there not enough acreage available now for the exercises? And, my other concern is the cost to the taxpayer if the area is to be maintained by the govt for very little ueage.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1686
<b>Last Name</b>	Mumm
<b>First Name</b>	Rhonda
<b>Comment</b>	<p>Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/10/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy</p>

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1687
<b>Last Name</b>	richardson
<b>First Name</b>	judy
<b>Comment</b>	Its crazy to take this land, it will be in my front yard. why this land? The gov. doesn't have the money they need now, how can they do this?
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1688

**Last Name** Brown

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I have ridden and raced in the Johnson Valley for over the past 20 to 30 years. I have family that go there at least 2 to 3 times a year and friends that attend all the different motorcycle races put on there every year. To lose this OHV area would be detrimental to the many people who recreate in this area on a weekly and yearly basis. Plus the money that is spent can be in the thousands per month to do what they love. With all the land that is locked up every year there will come a point that there is not going to be enough land to support all the people that enjoy recreating this way. This will cause a heavier burden on adjacent states and areas that are off limits to OHV users. If you have 800,000 to 1,000,000 people using this area currently, Where are they going to go if this area is closed down? I have lived in Nevada my whole life and with all the closures that have occurred in California over the last 10 years have caused a heavy influx of OHV users to the areas I have ridden in my whole life. This would be the case for sure on all adjacent States if this area is closed down. Pretty soon the other States will not be able to handle this influx. I am very supportive of our Marines and having them trained sufficiently to protect us at all times, so we can have our freedom! But how much land do they need, There are many training facilities in the U.S. that can accommodate all our service personnel and adding this land to there already existing acreage is unnecessary. We need Johnson Valley for the outdoor enthusiast so please take into consideration my comments. Thank You for your time and letting me voice my opinion on this matter. Kevin A. Brown

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land

would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	1689
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Dont close Johnson valley, me and my family have been going there since I was 2 years old, we are running out of places to ride. It kept me out of troulbe as a kid letting out my frustration out on my bike. It releases all my stress and lets me spend time with the family out in the quiet desert. I teach my kids to take back what you brought out and to pick up any other trash if we see it. My kids keep up their grades or else they dont ride, it is very motivational tool it worked for me and also works for my kids.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/10/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1690

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The State of California and the Federal Govt. have enough land that they cannot maintain right now. The Johnson Valley is another in a long list of unneeded and misused PUBLIC LAND. It is a joke that they would want to take over control of another 200,000 acres when they can't afford to clean the toilets in State and Federal parks right now. As a taxpayer as well as an outdoor recreationalist who enjoys taking my family to areas that have Dry Camp camping and not just little spaces (Cookie cutter) type sites. With the economy in the condition of near bankruptcy we need areas such as these to bring much needed dollars for the economy. Please consider removing this site from the govt. lists of already failed acquisitions. We the people don't need the Govt. taking more of our public land for their misuse and abuse.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1691

**Last Name** Nielsen

**First Name** Bob

**Comment** I am writing you all today about my concern that you might take away Johnson Valley OHV area away from me and my family, I ride out there around 10 times a year my son is in the US Air Force and I used to take him out there and we have had Life Memories Forever I have spent time with my family and friends for many years, I alone spend at least 2 to 3 hundred dollars every time I go. It would be a human tragedy for you all to take this away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1692

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1693

**Last Name** Nesbitt

**First Name** Bryce

**Comment** Please keep Johnson Valley open to OHV recreation. Much of the public land in California is off limits to OHV recreation and closing Johnson Valley to this would be devastating to motorcycle riders like myself. Johnson Valley is home to many great desert races for motorcyclists and it would be disappointing to many folks to lose the opportunity to ride/race in Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/10/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1694

**Last Name** Kilpatrick

**First Name** Pat

**Comment** Gentlemen, I submit these comments concerning the proposed land acquisition for the MCAGCC or MAGTF-TC. My main concern is for the Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) recreation area, alternative six. As a retired Marine Infantryman (MOS 0311, 0313, 0369), with combat experience, I fully understand the value of live fire training. Fire and movement and fire and maneuver are the essence of the Corps and its successful mission accomplishment across the Globe. My family and friends use Johnson Valley OHV at least ten times throughout the year. It is the only riding area within an hour's drive of Twentynine Palms and Yucca Valley. My three children, wife and I all have ATVs that we enjoy riding in the beautiful desert of Johnson Valley. If the OHV area were to be closed, and eventually it would be closed, we would have to travel a lot further in order to go riding. With the price of fuel as high as it is that probably wouldn't happen. This will lead to the sale of all ATV's thus impacting the local economy, I would no longer have them serviced and repaired by the local shops nor would I purchase additional ridding products. Additionally, Johnson Valley is home to "The King of the Hammers" race. This event attracts teams for across the world bringing in a large volume of income during that time. I ask you to put more thought into alternative 3. Yes it will be more difficult for maneuver elements but show me a

difficulty the Marine Corps can't overcome. Please consider the economic impact in these difficult times. Alternative three is my personal recommendation. Semper Fidelis Kilpatrick, Pat P. SSgt USMC (Retired)

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1695

**Last Name** Adams

**First Name** David

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling

conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiler, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects

of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

**Comment ID** 1696

**Last Name** Suesse

**First Name** Ned

**Comment** Johnson Valley represents an increasingly rare resource- a place for people to enjoy our public lands. There are many opportunities for non-motorized recreation throughout California and the West, but an ever dwindling number of places for responsible recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1697

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE KEEP JOHNSON VALLEY OPEN TO OHV USE!!!!!!! The more areas you guys close the more riders that are piled on top of each other and the more erosion and harder the impact on the fewer areas we have to ride. Please stop the madness and keep it open!

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential

overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1698

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE KEEP JOHNSON VALLEY OPEN TO OHV USE!!!!!! The more areas you guys close the more riders that are piled on top of each other and the more erosion and harder the impact on the fewer areas we have to ride. Please stop the madness and keep it open!

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 1699

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** If we need to expand the military base and take away what little riding area we have left for us, we should be granted back one of our other riding areas that were previously removed from our access. People mention our trails cause environmental damage and deep ruts, the 20 years I've been riding, the trails I ride on are at the same level as the ground next to them. I don't see how we're destroying the ground we're riding on. The biggest issue is that we should keep the trails open and free for firefighters to fight forest fire.

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1700

**Last Name** Yeoman

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** I feel the option 3 is the best plan for family camping and off road recreation. Our family has enjoyed camping in the area for many years. Closing it would impact the Big Bear trails and other off road areas. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1701

**Last Name** Vinson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** To Whom it may concern, Please do not take Johnson Valley from the public. It is an area used by thousands to recreate and vacation with their families, as well as an attraction to maintain and finance the local communities in the surrounding area. I spend as many as 20 weekends a year in Johnson Valley and I can't imagine a place on earth that could replace it. The loss of Johnson Valley means that I would have to drive almost 100 more miles on the weekend to participate in my hobby. I can't afford to do that. Thank you, Mike Vinson

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1702

**Last Name** Eyrich

**First Name** Gregory

**Comment** I have been using the Johnson Valley area for Off Road motorcycle riding since 1974. The attempt to take this land away from the people is nothing but wrong. Given the Alternatives presented by the military, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not

really very well with the other services." Once again I urge the selection of "No Action" and preserving this land for the OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1703

**Last Name** Draeger

**First Name** Sebastian

**Comment** To whom it may concern. Johnson valley is a unique area that would be a great loss to the OHV community if closed to public use. I suggest a compromise where training would be done on public land (johnson valley) and leave the live fire training to existing military only land. The area is large enough to be shared, it could be a good oportunity for good P.R. and recruiting. Additionally land use is already a huge battle for responsible OHV users. Land encroachment from development, actual and supposed enviromental issues and the fact that "closures" are the only thing that are happening for us. There are no new local OHV areas and I fear there will not be any. This is a non expendable resource. It helps supports the locally economy and all the companies that sell to ohv users. I hope My compromise is considered. I feel it may give all parties affected what they need with giving up very little. Thank you for your time, Sebastian Draeger

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1704

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For a great number of years me and my family have been going out to Johnson Valley. To enjoy the every thong it has to offer. From hiking, camping, off roading. We also have family and friends that own property

there. Now we have started to bring our grandchildren out so they can also enjoy it. And to teach them about the outdoors. Now dont get me wrong, i feel our men and women of the arm forces need a place to train. But land that we use to go to is now closed to what we enjoy to do. And we to have sons that are in the arm forces and are heart broken that when they get out that they my not be able totake thier familys there. thanks foe reading this!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1705

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area ter 15 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Anderson Dry Lake, Means Dry Lake and Soggy Dry Lake, where we engage in such activities as Desert and Enduro Motorcycle racing. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$300 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$300 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have

patronized the following businesses Lucerne Valley Market, Burger Depot, and the Y Cafe, among others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area: If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long- standing visitor (over 34 years) to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter. Peter Postel

**Date Comment Received** 5/11/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1706

**Last Name** Tremblay

**First Name** Casey

**Comment** Johnson Valley has been a great place to ride and RV at for years. Please do not take this land. Our small towns get money every weekend from offroaders. Look at Bear Valley on a Friday or Sunday. 29 Palms is way big, do not take land. Thanks Casey

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1707

**Last Name** Ohland

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public. The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability. The DOD proposal would significantly disrupt OHV use in the popular

Johnson Valley OHV Area. Many off-highway enthusiasts feel conflicted on this issue; on one hand they support the US Military and understand the economic importance of the Twentynine Palms base to adjacent communities. On the other hand, off-highway vehicle users have, over the years, been "crammed" into the Johnson Valley area after decades of Wilderness designation, administrative closures, and lawsuits that closed millions of acres of the California desert. The great respect for our fighting men and women notwithstanding, a review of the DEIS indicates that the base expansion is based on the assumption that there is a need for three Marine Expeditionary Brigades to train simultaneously. Upon review, it appears the DOD has developed a proposal based on an outdated segregated training model. Also, questions regarding the cost of the base expansion; given budget constraints, the current fiscal crisis and ballooning national deficit; have been raised. Off-highway vehicle recreation is a very popular family activity, especially in Southern California. According to the California State Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division (OHMVR), between 1980 and 2007 the number of registered OHVs has increased 370%. Unfortunately, since 1980 the amount of desert lands available for this type of recreation has fallen dramatically. Due to its proximity to southern California metropolitan areas, Johnson Valley is one of the most important areas to serve this growing demand for both in-state and out-of-state visitors.

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the

proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a current Marine Corps training requirement. In addition to the high deployment tempo in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Marine Corps must maintain high proficiency for other vital Marine Corps missions, including combined arms maneuver at the MEB level. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live- fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1708
<b>Last Name</b>	Nay
<b>First Name</b>	Donn
<b>Comment</b>	Alternative 3 will allow inclusion/addition of Cadiz inc. holdings of ground water. Water is already a scarce commodity for the 29 Palms Marine Base. Without additional water resources this document fails to show how the

addition to the base/training area will be supplied with sufficient water for either construction dust mitigation or dust/pollution mitigation during training exercises.

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Section 4.13 of the EIS discusses expected impacts to Water Resources that would result from the proposed action. Under each Alternative, impacts to water resources are expected to be Less Than significant.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1709

**Last Name** Bayr

**First Name** Frank

**Comment** I AM OPPOSED TO THE CLOSURE OF THIS AREA.

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1710

**Last Name** Westbrook

**First Name** Norma

**Comment** I do not understand why you are taking away open land that has been established as a recreation area for many years. When there is areas and areas of land to the east of the marine base in 29 Palms, and also to the

north where there is open land undeveloped. I was out near the land north of highway 40 and there is nothing developed out there in the middle of the desert. But still you want to take recreation area instead. Again I do not understand why the politicians are involved in this take-over. It seems they are not for the people for whom they represent. Thank you listenin, I hope you will read this comment.

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1711

**Last Name** Westbrook

**First Name** Norma

**Comment** I am again protesting the take-over of the public (recreation) area to the east of Lucerne Valley. Besides the Airspace/air traffic, Land use, Mining/minerals, Noise, Recreation that are involved in the area, and only 8 miles away from the town of Lucerne Valley this is not acceptable. GO EAST OR NORTH, PLEASE AND END THIS TAKE-OVER. Thank you the letting me comment, I hope you will read these comments.

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1712

**Last Name** Delaney

**First Name** Nate

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/12/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air- Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the

U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB- sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1713
<b>Last Name</b>	Antonio
<b>First Name</b>	Tim
<b>Comment</b>	The annexation of Johnson Valley would be of tremendous impact to the OHV community and lifestyle, not to mention the economic impact of the industry....many of whom are based and test products in the valley. Recreation areas being closed or limited will force more people into less areas, causing more negative impact from an environmental aspect...not to mention impact. There are alternatives to this expansion and taking land that is responsibly used and enjoyed is irresponsible...both fiscally and environmentally. Don't take what is rightfully used by the people...for the people....
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/12/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and

direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1714
<b>Last Name</b>	Maassberg
<b>First Name</b>	Carl
<b>Comment</b>	Please dont take the most awesome place to race away from thousands of good hard working respectable people that live for the sport of racing off-road.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/13/2011
<b>Response</b>	Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1715

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We do not want an expansion of the military in this part of the desert. My home is near this area for a reason, we use the blm land for hiking, off roading, and generally enjoying nature.

**Date Comment Received** 5/14/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1716

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm 58 yrs old and ride my quad in JV OHV with friends from work. Usually our numbers are from 4 or 5 of us to 18-20. We are respectful of our land and we don't trash it. JV OHV is a family-oriented area that has been used by generations of off-roaders. I am looking forward to the day my 3 year old twin grandkids can start riding there. The area is very diverse with something for all off-roaders. To say that 2/3rds of it needs to be taken over by the Army due to the Afghanistan war is not justified, since we will be eventually pulling out of there. The army has enough of OUR land to train. Our off-roading supports thousands of jobs in both mechanical repair, parts, and clothing. It also supports the local economies of the areas we visit

via gasoline and food. We are getting squeezed out more and more from open areas. I support our military, but enough is enough!

**Date Comment Received** 5/14/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1717

**Last Name** Crowder

**First Name** Aaron

**Comment** Genright is made by offroaders for offroaders. Countless hours of outdoors testing has brought back the results desired by the best in the business. Do it right the first time with Genright.

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1718

**Last Name** may

**First Name** paul

**Comment** more info

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1719

**Last Name** Blades

**First Name** Ron

**Comment** I would like to see the expansion, if any at all, of the Marine Base if any go towards the east of the existing base. My family and friends visit the Johnson Valley area for recreational purposes numerous times a year. My boy has learned many skills while camping/riding in this area. To lose this area of open desert for use by the public would be devastating economically for the local businesses. Much of their local economy counts on the business brought in by the people visiting for the local recreational opportunities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1720

**Last Name** Glatzel

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air- Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB- sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1721

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I respectfully submit that the Johnson Valley OHV area remain open to public access indefinitely, without limitation. Johnson Valley OHV is a jewel of the OHV community and has been enjoyed for generations and should be accessible for generations to come. I believe the offroad community has less of an environmental impact than any military operation conducted in the area. I also believe that our community should not agree to share the area with the U.S. Marine Corp because I believe the Marine Corp will determine that more training time will be needed to conduct exercises

in Johnson Valley OHV and our right to access the land will be gone. Therefore, I petition to opt for No Action- ( No New Land). I respect the U.S. Armed Forces and all service members for their sacrifice to uphold our freedom at home. We have the most powerful military force in the world. Surely our forces can maintain this strength without encroaching onto Johnson Valley OHV. Sincerely submitted,

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1722

**Last Name** Kuljis

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** I purchased my home in Landers Ca. in 1999 to have access to the large open BLM offroading area. My family uses this vast and diverse desert riding park every week. We support many local businesses including the local government via state and local taxes. The offroading community in this area keeps in touch and supports each other. In light of the governments spending cutbacks to reduce the deficit, and the scaling back of some of our military presence maybe it would be wise to use the existing base lands and combine it with the Fort Irwin Area. Thanks Steve Kuljis

**Date Comment Received** 5/15/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1723

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** It has never made sense to me why we need to have additional training grounds, when we fought too many wars using the grounds we have now. Defense Secretary Robert Gates has even commented it would not be wise to send in massive troops to the Middle East. Massive troops will never work yet we keep practicing old war maneuvers. We now have unmanned drones that will take out tanks and other larger weaponry. Therefore, why take Johnson Valley from the people who truly enjoy and need this area as a place to escape from every day pressures. I feel it would be a great shame on our County to take this land away from the people who need it the most our ordinary citizens.

**Date Comment Received** 5/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1724

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Iam asking that you reconsider closing Johnson Valley. My family and I ride motorcycles together for fun and have so for many years. We are not after to hurt the land we are after to have good family time doing a great sport. The motorcycle sport has a family of it own and everyone just wants a chance to ride and have fun with the family. We are safe for animals out there and dont want anyone hurt. Please reconsider my kids are young and want the to get the to enjoy a great sport with people. thank you for you consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/16/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1725

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am strongly against the military taking the public-use land west of USMCB, 29 Palms, California. In this day where the government has several inactive and under-utilized bases, and is constantly threatening closing more, I don't agree that it is appropriate or even reasonable to take public-use land that serves so many purposes for the surrounding area. The public use of this area not only gives a wide region of tax-paying citizens a place to go for safe, affordable recreation; but their activities there and in route provide much-needed financial support to the surrounding area. In

many cases, the indirect income generated from the users of this area is the only support of an otherwise poor area; and in other cases, the related revenue is what makes the difference between keeping a regional business alive, and causing it to close. This is not an affluent area, and sometimes even a little income is just enough to keep things going. I have read statements saying that some of the area will only be "closed sometimes"; but I don't believe that temporary closures will really be temporary in the long-term. History has proven that once land, such as this, is taken from public use, the guidelines for its use change to where it is more easily taken on a permanent basis. I am also concerned about the other effects of having military maneuvers so close to Lucerne Valley. These concerns include issues related to noise, percussion, stray arms fire, unexploded munitions, just to name a few. While this area is a common playground for off-roaders, it is far more. It is a place for affordable camping, hiking, other out-door recreation; it is a broad area for Amateur Radio antenna and propagation experimentation; it is a sanctuary for various forms of wild-life; and it is a site for many historical mines. These days, there are so few off-road areas; and their numbers and sizes are being reduced all the time. Please don't take yet another one from the tax-paying citizens.

**Date Comment Received** 5/16/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1726

**Last Name** Czech

**First Name** David

**Comment** The ever dwindling public spaces are troubling, so is the state of warfare. It doesn't look like war is solving any problems at all. It actually seems like the U.S. presence globally is creating more enemies. So you want us to give up the very freedoms that define us as Americans? The Iconic American west is a National Heritage, a birthright. But just like our civil rights under the patriot act, the Govt. wants to take away something that was assured to us as Americans with some pretext of it being for our own protection? Sounds like BS to me. I fully oppose the las. Sounds like B.S. to me

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1727

**Last Name** thorn

**First Name** nick

**Comment** We have los enough of our recreational land to the federal government already. These lands are a place where we can take our children and engage in family activities that build character. we can not allow the federal government to comendere them any longer

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1728

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** According to the DEIS, on page 1-5 in Chapter one, purpose and need, it clearly states that one main task is to identify MEB training requirements, and that "The findings of this effort were published in a January 2004 report entitled MEB Training Exercise Study: Identifying MEB Training Requirements (Center for Naval Analyses 2004b)." In examining the January 2004 report, I have found this: "We used MEB 2015 [1] to shape our analysis. Key MEB 2015 characteristics include three battalion task forces, (two of which move via surface lift and one by vertical lift), three Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) squadrons, and a brigade service support group. Total manning for this MEB is about 17,000 to 20,000 Marines." Basically the DEIS says that the reason for 29 Palms expanding is to be able to train three battalion task forces. However, on April 15th, 2011, General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps spoke at the Fletcher Luncheon. His remarks in full can be seen here: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/cmc/Documents/110415%20--%20Fletcher%20Conference%20Corrected.pdf> In speaking about future military actions and where the Marines are going to operate once we come out of Afghanistan, he explained the "arc of instability." It is within this arc of instability that the Marines will most likely be engaging the enemy. These areas will be our future battlefields over the next two decades. In speaking about this arc of instability, General Amos says: "But we see that's probably what the world is going to look like for the next two decades. A lot more information there, but we think that's going to be our backyard because this is primarily the littorals, because these are kind of the nasty missions and things that, quite honestly, don't require 20,000 Marines on the ground." If the future operations of the Marine Corps, according to the Commandant of the Marine Corps himself, are NOT going to require 20,000 Marines on the ground, then why are we expanding 29 Palms to train a MEB from about 17,00 to 20,000 Marines? We have been told that 29 Palms must "Train as we fight." If this is true, then expanding 29 Palms will not be training as you fight in that future campaigns will be much smaller and not to the scale of campaigns like Afghanistan.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task

forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1729

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am hoping that there is no expansion of the 20 Palms BAse into the Jonson Valley area. My family has become fond of the area and purchased real estate in the area. We use it as ORV play and family get-togethers. We used to go to Anza Borrego, but increased motor vehicle laws have forced us out-everyone doesn't have street legal vehicles. And Ocotillo Wells is just too crazy. We have come to love the area near Giant Rock/Emerson Dry Lake all the way to Lucerne and up to Big Bear too. We can get to most of these areas on our OHV. Don't take this land away from us. Thank you, Martin.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding.

The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1730

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** The following quote is from General Amos' Opening Statement before the Senate Armed Services Committee on Tuesday, March 8th 2011 "Lastly, you have my promise that in these challenging times ahead, the Marine Corps will only ask for what it needs, not what it might want. We will make the hard decisions before coming to Congress and we will redouble our efforts toward our traditional ~culture of frugality" In a previous comment that I have submitted on the DEIS, I outlined how General Amos also stated that the Marine corps will be down sizing, and that also MEB's manning 17,000 to 20,000 troops will not be needed in the future, smaller campaigns in the "Arc of Stability" once we are out of Afganistan. If the Marine Corps will only be asking for what it NEEDS, then there is no reason for the Marine Corps to exapand 29 Palms in order to train 3 MEB's at once. Therefore: the entire DEIS needs to be thrown out as it is based on the proposed "needs" of the Marine Corps from six years ago.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and

maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1731
<b>Last Name</b>	Belk
<b>First Name</b>	Curtis
<b>Comment</b>	Desert area for off-roading continues to shrink because of environmental restrictions. My family has enjoyed the Johnson Valley area for the last 40 years and now our 4th generation are becoming desert enthusiasts as these young ones learn the joy of desert camping and off-roading. Please consider not taking some of the remaining great off-roading terrain. I would suggest that you take some of the area to the east and north
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/17/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008.

Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1732
<b>Last Name</b>	Hartfiel
<b>First Name</b>	Robin
<b>Comment</b>	Forget what Horace Greeley said... Go East young Marines, not West! Keep Johnson Valley open for the public, please. We need more OHV access, not another bombing range.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/17/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.
<b>Comment ID</b>	1733
<b>Last Name</b>	Kederis
<b>First Name</b>	Joseph
<b>Comment</b>	29 Palms has plenty of land for training! I am a former Marine and motorcycle rider who rides west and north of the base. I have friends who own property in Johnson Valley solely for the purpose of off-roading. We are there several times a month and have spent thousands of dollars in the Yucca/Johnson Valley area. Our contribution to the local economy would

stop if the base expands and I doubt that our national security would suffer if the base did not expand!

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1734

**Last Name** Smejkal

**First Name** Dan

**Comment** I would like to keep Johnson Valley OHV area open to the public to enjoy. Having these OHV areas available keep people from riding illegally on private lands. The land now open to public use is shrinking and this would be a huge loss for the families who enjoy and use this land responsibly. I support our armed forces but hope they choose an area east of the base.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by

members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1735

**Last Name** Willgues

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** We live in Landers. We need to be protected and not lose our homes and property

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1736

**Last Name** Vanmeter

**First Name** James

**Comment** Please keep the riding area open to the public. If you think the Military has a hard time finding a place to work/play, just try finding someplace to go off road riding/driving. Jim VanMeter

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1737

**Last Name** Willgues

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** I am just one of many people who live in landers and own a home. It is not a rich or fancy and big house, but we love living in our area. We hear and see many times the bombing, explosion and fire bombs go off from the base and shake up our little house and wonder every time if it will destroy our house. We love living in the quiet desert and enjoy the beautiful scenery, but do not enjoy the damage that is happening to our house because the Marine base is always bombing our little desert we live in.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1738

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Marines need to train, But we also need to play. Please keep Johnson Valley for the Off Roaders

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development

of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1739

**Last Name** Moorhusen

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Please consider heading east instead of west due to the extreme lack of off road riding land available. Offroaders have continued to lose land over the years, and value what little open space is available for legal riding. Otherwise, I fully support the Marine Corp in general and thank you all for your service.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1740

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For many years my children and grandchildren have enjoyed riding motorcycles, jeeping, and land sailing around the Soggy Dry Lake area. From Soggy Dry Lake they ride out to the areas further away such as the

northern petroglyphs, and the Rock Pile. Please keep all of the land from Emmerson Dry Lake to the Rock Pile open year round for families like ours to recreate in. If you still need more land go north or east of the current base, but leave the southern land to the public. Recreation in Johnson Valley has a huge impact on Southern California businesses, keep the Johnson Valley area open for recreation, otherwise local businesses will need to close their doors. Johnson Valley is a place to recreate in, not to bomb and kill everything from spring flowers to the many tortioses in the region. You may feel you need more land, but you are seeking far too much!

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1741

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I own a home in Johnson Valley and have used the Johnson Valley area for Recreation for over 30 years. With all the development activities and environmentalists grabbing open area, Johnson Valley is one of the few remaining places to enjoy outdoor recreation. It is hard to imagine that the size of the base is inadequate. It is a vast area already. The Military is managing now with the current base size, and our Military is spread out about as thin as they could possibly be all around the world. Please let the thousands of people who enjoy the Recreation that Johnson Valley has to offer continue to do so. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while

also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1742

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Marine Corp, Johnson Valley is a place my family and I have been going to for years. Please do not take what is left of the off-roading space left in California. Also note, 70 state parks will close in CA this year. Please leave this land for many of us to enjoy. Thank you, Ryan

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1743

**Last Name** Mossman

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** My family and I use the Johnson Valley OHV area extensively since it is a short 30 drive from our home. We hike, explore the mining areas, ride our motorcycles, drive 4X4's, and go wildflower watching in this area. I know adequate training area must be of utmost importance in the preparation of US Marines but I would ask that if there is a possibility of expanding eastward instead of westward then that would be an ideal alternative instead. I apologize that I do not know of the issues that the US Marine Corp would face by expanding eastward but that would save the Johnson Valley area for the continued enjoyment of my family and friends. Thank you for taking the time to consider this request.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1744

**Last Name** Mossman

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Please add me to your mailing list

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1745

**Last Name** Farris

**First Name** Curt

**Comment** dont take over Johnson Valley, There are millions of acres to the east of you, all the way to the colorado river, and you guys want want to close a popular riding area, OF WHICH THERE ARE VERY FEW LEFT FOR PUBLIC USE

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1746

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE CONSIDER AN EASTWARD EXPANSION OF 29 PALMS TRAINING AREA, NOT WESTWARD INTO THE JOHNSON VALLEY AREA WHERE THOUSANDS RECREATE.

**Date Comment Received** 5/17/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1747

**Last Name** Schulz

**First Name** Les

**Comment** As much as I am a huge supporter of our military, I am also a huge supporter of PUBLIC LANDS and their access. The Feds. and the State have been taking our OHV land away for years and it's time that it stops now. The option would be that we trade you Johnson Valley for an equal amount of recreational land in the back country at Pendleton or the Marines just expand eastward.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1748

**Last Name** LaKomski

**First Name** David

**Comment** As a land owner, tax payer and public land user, I am against the expansion of the Twenty Nine Palms Marine Base. The military is in contraction and the Federal Government is deep financial crisis. It is an unnecessary federal expenditure which will have dire fiscal repercussions for the Johnson Valley Area. Not only will it impact the number of dollars brought into the area by the users of the public land, it will lower my property value (lower property taxes). I would rather see my tax dollars that are used for the military spent on supplying our troops with better weapons and more pay. I use the land in the expansion area. The expansion will also impact my enjoyment of my public land (I pay both local property tax and federal income tax). I implore you to reject the plan to allow the Marine base to expand

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1749

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not change the Johnson Valley OHV recreation area. OHV parks are already hard enough to find and myself along with many other riders would be very upset at the loss of yet another park.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1750

**Last Name** Ehlers

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** Go East Young Man! Heading east would have the least impact on all interested parties, including off road recreation, and the local merchants, who owe their existence, to the people who frequent this area. Thank you  
Ken Ehlers

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1751

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not expand the base westward. This is useful public recreational area. Expand eastward since this is more remote to the public. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1752

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** In regards to the 29 Palms Expansion please do not take away our riding land known as Johnson Valley. Please expand to the east into the open land not to west where off-road enthusiast use this land to spend quality time with their families.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1753

**Last Name** Beckman

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** Please do not close the Johnson Valley OHV. The off road community does not deserve to lose yet another riding area. WE need to work to preserve the right to protect and reserve the rights of users on public lands. Consider the impact of those while you are making this unfortunate decision.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1754

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please refrain from taking any more land away from us for recreational use. It seems clear that you can "Go East, Not West!"...

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1755

**Last Name** Haggard

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** I am strongly apposed to this expansion. Johnson Valley is a rare jewel for the OHV community. Why can't the base be expanded to the north and east?

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1756

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Johnson Valley is one of the few Off Road Areas left in Southern California. There is much more Desert to the east that is not as close to residents. Please leave this land for public use.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1757

**Last Name** Zengler

**First Name** William

**Comment** I think it would be huge mistake for the U.S. Marine Corps to take away the the land at Johnson Valley from the public. Their are thousands of us in the OHV community that use Johnson Valley and since it is one of the MAIN areas to go it would be a tragedy to lose it. We in the OHV community have been slowly losing our riding areas and the more places that get closed down the more unsafe it becomes for us because there are aolt more of us, including small children that are out there with their families, in smaller and smaller areas. My family & friends have been going to Johnson Valley for many years and it would be a shame to see it go.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant

cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1758

**Last Name** Casida

**First Name** Logan

**Comment** I love my off road activities in Johnson Valley. I also have major support the Military, more than our government at times. However to take away a major area of public land and ignore the consciences is just dumb. The DEIS is simply incomplete and wrong in assuming local communities will survive without the thousands of offroaders spending money in those communities. My family visits Johnson Valley at least 10 times a year, if not more, for the last 30 years. Soggy dry lake and Means Dry Lake are our favorite places to camp. Riding to the dunes around Means or the technical trails northeast of Soggy is what we like best. In fact, I just had my bachelor party at Soggy. I hope The Marines refrain from closing a great recreation area to the public. I could only support NO ACTION alternative to continue public recreation in Johnson Valley and to avoid economic impacts in the surrounding communities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1759

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley riding area is not a good place to expand the base. This riding area is used by many off roaders and taking it away would cause people to travel further to enjoy off roading. Please explore expanding in another direction.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1760

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Doing this would be a major hit as to what makes this country so great...OUR FREEDOM.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1761

**Last Name** Haggard

**First Name** Herb

**Comment** I am opposed to the expansion into public land in the Johnson valley off highway vehicle area. I live close by and frequently use this area with my family.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1762

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Though I value the training of our military personnel, I believe there is a balance that needs to be struck between the use of the land for training and recreation. What purpose does it serve to be the land of the free protected by the best military on earth if there is no free land for us to enjoy! I strongly urge that Johnson Valley OHV remain under the control of the BLM and open for recreation by the citizens of our great nation. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1763

**Last Name** NIBLACK

**First Name** PHILLIP

**Comment** My name is Phillip Niblack and I am a business owner in the Inland Empire region and also an avid off road enthusiast. My family and I have been

using the Johnson Valley OHV area for many years now and for my son and daughter to not be able to enjoy this area in the future is unimaginable to me. My wife and I have basically raised our children on family weekend trips as well as celebrating holidays such as Thanksgiving and New years eve out in the Johnson Valley area. I fully support our military and consider myself a patriot of this great country but taking even more of our own land from us is unacceptable. The offroad community has had its areas shrunk down to a bare minimum already and this massive land acquisition would create far reaching problems. The surrounding communities of Johnson Valley have already suffered tremendous economic hardships with the recent economic turndown and this proposal would surely not help the situation to say the least. I drive through these communities half a dozen times per year on my way to desert recreation areas as well as the Colorado River area and it has changed drastically in the last couple of years. These people just will not be able to sustain a massive blow such as this. The offroad industry (motorcycle dealerships, race car fabricators, aftermarket accessory manufacturers, rv dealerships) will all be heavily affected by this land acquisition. Just the last couple years of a bad economy has already closed the doors of many of these businesses. We need to keep public lands open so that our future generations have a place to explore, relax, and enjoy mother nature without all of the crowds and stresses that we all must live in these days. Again I fully support our military and our troops but there has to be an alternative to taking even more land from us. Sincerely Phillip Niblack

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered

alternatives for the proposed action. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1764

**Last Name** Semple

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** How many millions of people live in SoCa ? There is already no place to ride in riverside county glamis has heavy restrictions because of the military. And now you want to take more legal riding area away ? Unfair ! The section of the desert the military has now is the size of a small country why do they need more? If they need it that bad then give us equal to what they take in return somewhere close to the riding public. Sounds to me like a land grab to keep more secrets like there are enough out there already!

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1765

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I adamantly oppose the closure of a large portion of Johnson Valley OHV Area due to the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps Base. I have been riding motorcycles and camping in that area since the early 1960's. The area provides one of the few "open" riding areas left in California and has some very unique features. Closure of this area will further burden the already overcrowded diminishing areas to camp and ride. Obviously, it will also have a negative financial impact on Lucerne Valley businesses. It appears that an alternative expansion could be made toward the east without necessitating closure of Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1766

**Last Name** surber

**First Name** steve

**Comment** Hello ! Myself and my family and friends have been riding out in Johnson Valley for many years.. most areas west of Johnson valley have been closed down over the years either by the BLM or private land owners. As much as I feel the need for military training. I feel that there are other areas where this can be done. Hopefully the off road riding area will be left as is now. Thank you Steve

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1767

**Last Name** Roach

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only the No-Action Alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. If the No-Action alternative cannot work, then I would like to encourage 29 Palms to expand East instead of West. This would give the Marines the extra area they need to train without closing one of the most popular OHV recreation areas in the world. If the Marines were to expand 29 Palms West into Johnson Valley, it would completely crush the local economy, remove one of the last paces in Southern Ca. where off-road racing is allowed to take place and would severely damage the OHV industry in California

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1768

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This land is and should remain open for public use. OHV areas are limited in numbers as it is. The portion of US Citizens that pay taxes and OHV registration fees should not be penalized by the government. This specific land grab by the government is not right and should not be considered.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1769

**Last Name** Walton

**First Name** Tracy

**Comment** Please do not take the only public off roading land we have left. My family has enjoyed this land forever.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1770

**Last Name** Walton

**First Name** Randy

**Comment** First of all, Thank you to every Marine out there. Now do you really think i believe this is the only place to train in the world? I don't think so. I have been coming to Johnson Valley my whole life. Please don't close it. My

kids beg you not to close it. Do you have any idea of the financial impact to the off road industry you are hurting. Please leave us alone.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1771

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** If you must expand, expand to the North or East. Alternative 6 will close airspace required by civilian and commercial pilots. The Military already occupies too much airspace. Have you coordinated these proposals with the FAA and civilian pilot associations (EAA/AOPA)?

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with

the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1772

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** Please keep us updated on this important issue.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1773

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** Please keep us updated on this important issue.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1774

**Last Name** Johanson

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Please allow the Johnson Valley desert area to remain for off road use. My family has enjoyed camping/riding in the area for many years. Please find an alternative to continue your training needs. Thank you, Mike Johanson

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that

acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	1775
<b>Last Name</b>	willis
<b>First Name</b>	tom
<b>Comment</b>	Off road motorcycle racing areas are becoming non existent due to radical environmental concern now the military may be taking a big chunk of what little we have left, maybe the military can go in a different direction and avoid this last area to race in or maybe there is a bigger piece to trade for. Please help us to keep our recreation and race area's available so that future generation's of our children have a place to go enjoy the wide open desert that their Great Grandparents on down have enjoyed for centuries . Thank You for your concern over all of us.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/18/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a

significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1776
<b>Last Name</b>	Wilson
<b>First Name</b>	Eric
<b>Comment</b>	Please do not take away Johnson Valley! The California tax payers and Green sticker money has gone into providing a designated riding area! Go East not West!
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/18/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1777

**Last Name** McDuell

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Please see the attached document.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response**

**Comment ID: 1777 (Page 1 of 3)**

Dear Sir:

The DEIS states:

Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

**3.11 Cultural Resources.** The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:

Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.

It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
  - Devaluation of surrounding private property.
  - Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.
- All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries.

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our

**Response to Comment 1777 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

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Comment ID: 1777 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment 1777 (Page 2 of 3):

desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage.

"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision."

—Desert Magazine 1944

**Comment ID: 1777 (Page 3 of 3)**

**Response to Comment 1777 (Page 3 of 3):**

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves.  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant. It shows the homesteads and how close they are to the proposed westward expansion area.

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

Thank you,  
Paul McDuell  
51761 Armelino Rd.  
Johnson Valley, Ca. 92285

**Comment ID** 1778

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take our riding area away from us. We don't have many legal places to ride left here in southern California and this is one of the good ones. There is plenty of desert east of the base that is not being used for off roading. thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1779

**Last Name** Hoffer

**First Name** Tres

**Comment** Please consider going East over West so as to leave the already limited area open for off-road use. This has become great family fun and family's these days need good family fun. I respect the military and your efforts in training to keep us all safe but if there is another option, I hope that you will consider that over taking away our outdoor fun. Thanks for the consideration. Tres Hoffer

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

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**Comment ID** 1780

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I fully support our military and their need for training, however I would respectfully request that you take No Action on this issue. Johnson Valley is one of the only areas left in Southern California that is open to off-road activities and racing. The off-road community has zero other alternatives. If you must have additional land for training please expand to the east. Closing Johnson Valley would be economically damaging to the surrounding communities and to the off-road industry. I grew up riding in Johnson Valley with my parents and now I ride there with my children. Our national security is vital, but please find a way that doesn't destroy a sport that is a big part of so many lives. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1781

**Last Name** Persinger

**First Name** Alex

**Comment** Johnson Valley is an iconic OHV area that my family has been going to for over 30 years, I would hate to see it go away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1782

**Last Name** Hamilton

**First Name** Marci

**Comment** Please do not expand into Johnson Valley. My family has spent many weekends and holidays camping there. Johnson Valley is such a beautiful place and attracts so many families and friends for a relaxing time. This is the closest OHV area to my home and reducing the size of Johnson Valley would be heartbreaking.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1783

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not do this. The off road community cannot handle another reduction of territory and use of public land. People come from all over california and adjoining states to enjoy the one last ohv area that has enough elbow room to have races and roam and camp. Your alternative to the east was the best. Please reconsider, the dirt bike industry is growing at a rapid rate as far as sports are concerned and we are desperately needing that space. America rules and so do you guys, thanks for your help on what on what the citizens believe is a major issue; losing our public land

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1784

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There is nothing like Johnson Valley for Jeep trails anywhere else in the US; it is truly unique. Closing the area to OHV recreation will not only hurt the many people who use it every year, it will also harm the local communities, which depend on the offroad enthusiasts as a steady source of revenue. The off road community is completely supportive of the US

military and especially our Marine Corps. We understand that training must come first, and we fully support their mission. But we're hoping there is space outside of and adjoining the Johnson Valley recreational area for the Marines to conduct their training in. There are certain areas within the Johnson Valley recreational area that simply cannot be replaced. I can't imagine the Marine Corps would knowingly close this area to those of who use it so often, and believe this must have been an oversight. Now that you do have such an understanding, I'd hope and request that you give the most possible consideration to expanding your training areas to adjoining desert terrain that does not take our Johnson Valley away from us.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1785

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing for two purposes: (1) to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and (2) to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, impacts for which no meaningful

mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family recreates in the Johnson Valley OHV area 3 to 4 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Soggy Dry Lake, where we engage in such activities as camping and dirt bike riding. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$ 200 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$ 200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/18/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1786

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** 29 palms needs to expand eastward...

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1787

**Last Name** Heffernan

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** If you must expand - then expand to the east. Johnson Valley is one of the last places in the state still available to the Off-road Community. We have been under fire and forced from land we paid for with out taxes and fees for the past 30 years. We have no where left to go. The Government and Military have unmatched power to take what they want. But realize we have the power of the vote and pay the taxes that allow both to exist. There is a real movement in California to stop paying the freight for both the Government and the Military. The people of California are fed up with the lack of respect and treatment we receive from our elected leaders and those that oppress us. We have continued to have our freedoms eroded with the words like Environment, Safety and Terrorism. The end is now for me. I will choose to live elsewhere if my rights as an American Citizen are trampled by those in power. Think hard before you do this as soon you won't have anyone to protect, as we will be gone to somewhere that we can be free from excess government intrusion on our right to pursue happiness.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1788

**Last Name** nemeth

**First Name** rick

**Comment** please don't take take johnson valley ohv area away from us. it is my favorite and most convenient riding place.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1789

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am truly hopeful that the additional lands sought for military training that would impact the Johnson Valley OHV area will not occur. This is an area that my family and friends have enjoyed for more than a decade with a large group going out there to enjoy the recreating there four to five times a year. The Johnson Valley OHV offers unique opportunities that are not otherwise found in the local region. With the rising cost of travel it would severely impact our ability to have family outings as there is no other suitable replacement. In addition, we support the local businesses that exist in the area and spend several hundreds of dollars each time we go. Please reconsider and revise your plans of allowing the expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Park. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1790

**Last Name** Dawson

**First Name** Lucas

**Comment** As an outdoor recreationalist and avid motorcyclist who makes a living in the motorsports industry, I am very concerned about more land being closed in the desert. I support the military and their needs, but if more land needs to be set aside for military activity, please do not do so at the expense of outdoor recreation. Perhaps a compromise could be achieved where if an amount of land is set aside for additional military exercises, that same amount of land could be set aside for outdoor recreation. There are many negative consequences to land closures, including economic impacts on local communities and safety, environmental and overuse issues when more users are concentrated in a smaller area. Public access to areas open for recreation is one of our most cherished public resources. Please do not close any more of this land down. If you must do so, consider moving the base farther east instead of west. And most importantly, set aside an equal or greater amount of land for the public as you intend to close to try and compensate the outdoor loving community in exchange for your planned military expansion.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over

time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1791
<b>Last Name</b>	Wells
<b>First Name</b>	Daniel
<b>Comment</b>	Please consider the need for us as humans to have recreation with family members in order to sustain family values that our military is protecting for this great nation. I believe area to the East of the existing 29 palms training facility is 'not' being used as a recreation area. Why not expand east and all of our 'needs' are realized!
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/19/2011
<b>Response</b>	The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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**Comment ID**

1792

**Last Name**

Stevens

**First Name**

Ed

**Comment**

I wish to thank the USMC for improving the quality of life for all citizens of the United States, and for their continued concern for the welfare of the citizens they serve in this great country. I urge you to reconsider the need for expansion of the 29 Palms Training. Consider alternates to expanding the training not the established Public Recreation area west of the current base. The USMC has ample land and opportunity to train and exercise in cooperation with other Joint Services, the California Public does not have any similar opportunity or recreation partners to enjoy cooperative OHV Recreation. The California Public shares the use of Johnson Valley with many recreation enthusiasts, it is not only used by the OHV enthusiast community. The increase in popularity of Johnson Valley as a recreation resource cannot be overlooked. OHV recreation and the activities that complement it such as camping, exploring, rock hounding, shooting etc. will all be effected by the expansion of 29 Palms to the West. This will greatly affect the quality of life in Southern California where these activities are a big part of the culture. The growing participation of OHV enthusiasts in California must be recognized. Public lands open to this form of recreation are closing at an alarming rate. Closing the established OHV recreation opportunity at Johnson Valley will be a loss of a public resource equal in value as any Designated Wilderness Area. The government cannot allow the loss of Johnson Valley as an OHV recreation resource. Even a partial loss of the OHV recreation opportunity is unacceptable. Any full or partial closure

of OHV opportunity at Johnson Valley must be offset with opening of equal or greater OHV opportunity elsewhere in the Region. Designation of unqualified Wilderness Study Areas as a State Vehicle Recreation Area is an option that cannot be overlooked, as State OHV Trust Fund dollars are available for this effort. These State OHV Trust funds could also be used to assist the Marine Corps. in relocating their proposed use for the Johnson Valley expansion to a different area that will not have the detrimental impact to OHV recreation. Please consider approval of Alternative A with no impact to OHV recreation in Johnson Valley, or consider incorporating offsetting measures to establish equal OHV recreation opportunity within the region in the preferred Alternative

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1793

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider another area to expand into other than the Johnson Valley OHV area. These areas are already getting shut down from different rights groups and land restrictions so they are very few and far between and if you can expand into another area it would be much better to our OHV sport!

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1794

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** In the DEIS, the entire purpose and need for 29 Palms to expand is based on the 2004 MEB Training Exercise Study: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las/documents/cna/CNA%20MEB%20Training%20Exercise%20Final%20Report%20D0010872%20A2%20Dec04.pdf> Not only is this document 7 years old, it is also important to note that this document was written in the same year as the Battle of Fallujah in Iraq. At this point in time, the Marine Corps were involved in both Operation

Vigilant Resolve (April 2004) and Operation Phantom Fury (November 2004) Operation Phantom Fury is considered the highest point of conflict in Fallujah, and the US Military called it some of the heaviest urban combat that the Marines had seen since the Battle of Hue City in 1968. It is evident that the 2004 MEB Training Exercise Study was written during a period of time when the Marines were fighting in major battles. It is important to understand the context that the document was written in. It was written during a high point of our involvement in the Middle East. Therefore it reflected the training requirements of that time, which was for large-scale MAGTF. Furthermore, in the draft (Identifying Training Requirements) of this document, there are 47 articles referenced in the document that are listed in the bibliography and references section of the MED training Exercise Study. Of those 47 documents, 24 are from the years 2001-2003, directly after 9/11 and during the beginning of Operation Enduring Freedom. The average year of the all the articles referenced in the document is 1997. In the final draft, there are only 4 references, all from 2003 and 2004. Bottom line: The DEIS is invalid because it is based on outdated information with how the Marines will fight, it does NOT consider a post Operation Enduring Freedom world. On March 14th, 2011, the Marine Corps listed the Force Structure Review. The structure of the Marine Corps and they way they operate with be significantly different after these changes.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one

of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1795

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** I would like to direct your attention to the Final Report of the MEB Training Exercise Study done in 2004. This document is the basis of the Marine Corps expanding 29 Palms. <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las/documents/cna/CNA%20MEB%20Training%20Exercise%20Fina%20Report%20D0010872%20A2%20Dec04.pdf> In that document, it says that 29 Palms has limited, long-exercise duration multi-Bn maneuver area at 29 Palms. It also clearly states to solve that problem, "Extend base boundary west to support additional Bn corridor" The key word in the document is "west." In 2004, how did the preparers of the report decide that extending west would be the best possible plan without research and backing? Could not the base expand east or in another direction? Did the report suggest West and then the DEIS was custom tailored to come to that conclusion? In the NEPA process, there must not be a pre-determined action. A DEIS must have several alternatives to solve the problem. In that the final report clearly says "expand base west" and not just "expand base," it is evident that expanding west is a pre-determined outcome. This violates the NEPA process. The entire DEIS needs to be thrown out.

**Date Comment Received** 5/19/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task

forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered a number of alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, which was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1796
<b>Last Name</b>	Darrow
<b>First Name</b>	David
<b>Comment</b>	<p>I am a off-road enthusiast and have riden motorcycles in Johnson Valley for over 20 years. The proposed expansion of the 29 Palms training area will negatively impact one of the few remaining OHV areas in southern california. I am an ardent supporter of the US military and especially our Marines. However, as a dirt bike rider in a state (California) that has seen fit to close many areas to off-road vehicle use, I have to object to the expansion of the 29 palms training area as it will result in one less area for me, my family, and friends to legally ride motorcycles. If the US Marines would lobby the state of California to create OHV "offset" property, similar to what is done by developers who develop over sensitive habits who then need to buy and create similar habit elsewhere, and obtain legal permission for OHV areas in or around the Lucerne Valley, I would remove all of my objections to this proposal. Thank you. Please don't close Johnson Valley to OHV use. -Dave Darrow Temecula, CA</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over

time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID**

1797

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

I am opposed to the land acquisition/airspace establishment being proposed by the United States Marine Corps, which will usurp any of the existing land/airspace currently designated as part of the Johnson Valley ORV area. As a California State and United States taxpayer who contributes to the funds that keep the Johnson Valley ORV operating, I am of the belief that acquisition of the area by the USMC would be tantamount to robbery of the funds that I and other off-highway vehicle users have paid for years and continue to pay to keep Johnson Valley open. As an attendee of some of the earliest public comment meetings held on this matter, I am not convinced that the USMC needs this area for such training, nor do I believe that there would be any way for the USMC and OHV users to share this area because of the live-fire requirements of the USMC training, which could raise the potential for injury or death by unspent ordnance left behind by the USMC. Furthermore, it has been proposed that possible mitigation--giving land for the land being acquired--could be a part of the possible resolution. I am opposed to this because the unique topography of the Johnson Valley OHV area makes it unlike any other OHV in the State of California, and in fact, the entire United States. Simply put, most OHV users who have visited Johnson Valley quickly come to recognize it among the most prime designated OHV area in the country. The USMC has the ability to deploy anywhere in the world, whereas California OHV users do not. Johnson Valley is a designated OHV park, and it should remain only that, not be turned into another training ground for a department of the largest, best-equipped, best-trained and most active military in the world. Scott Rousseau Costa Mesa, CA

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1798

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** In arguing against the expansion of 29 Palms, I would like to share a story told by General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps at the Defense Writers group breakfast on February 18th, 2011. "We found that we were buying a new water bull. Now, for everybody here, a water bull is not an animal. It's a big " it's a water tank that holds, I'm guessing, I don't know, four (hundred) or 500 gallons of water. "We call them"water bull," but that's like a water buffalo. And you tow it behind a Humvee or a seven-ton truck or that kind of thing. Now, that's where Marines get fresh water. You pump fresh water in it. You go up there, and Marines are up there shaving, and all that stuff. And we've got a good one. We've had that one since I was a lieutenant, and it works just fine. Nothing wrong with it; (served us as Marines ?). Well, we found out that " and I'm not sure who, but we said, well, we need a bigger water bull. We need one that's about three or four times as big. And we said, well " then we see this picture of this thing, and it's huge. It not only takes up more cube, it's heavier. Well, why do we need it? Well, because we've got a seven-ton truck now that can tow it. Because we can. We said, let's buy it. We canceled that program. So there's an example. There's others that are out there. But being frugal just means going back and paying very close attention, close scrutiny on everything we're buying, making sure that we can€ that it's something we need." In a post OEF world, The Marines are getting back to their frugal roots and only asking for what they NEED, not for what they want. Currently, with the state of the world and planning for smaller actions in littoral areas, the Marines do not need to train 3 Battalions for a large scale campaign. According to General Amos, the Marines were used in OEF as a"two for", as a second land army. Now their role is changing back to their original purpose. The entire DEIS needs to be thrown out since the purpose and need of the base expansion is no longer valid in a post OEF world.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1799

**Last Name** Hyke

**First Name** Carrie

**Comment** Please see attached letter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Comment ID: 1799 (Page 1 of 2)



May 20, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
Attn: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Subject: County of San Bernardino Department of Airports Comments on Draft EIS for the Twentynine Palms U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment

Attn: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager:

The Department of Airports appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Twentynine Palms U.S. Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC) Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment project. The Department of Airports operates six (6) general aviation airports for the County of San Bernardino. The County-operated airports are: Twentynine Palms, Barstow/Daggett, Apple Valley, Baker, Chino and Needles. Each airport supports general aviation, and countywide over 273,000 operations per year utilize the County's airports. Certain of the airports support military operations as well, most notably the Barstow/Daggett Airport, where approximately half of its 36,500 operations are military. The Department of Airports is committed to support the aviation needs of the U.S. military, while retaining the greatest possible opportunities for general aviation users.

The Marine Corps has been studying alternatives for proposed training-land acquisition and accompanying Special Use Airspace for three battalions (approx. 15,000 Marines) to simultaneously maneuver in close coordination using combined-arms (e.g., air/ground) live fire for a 48-72 hour training period. Land surrounding the MCAGCC was considered and 6 alternatives were developed and studied in the Draft EIS. The Draft EIS was published for a public review and comment period of February 25, 2011 to May 26, 2011.

The Draft EIS identifies Alternative No. 6 as the "preferred" alternative that will be carried forward for approval. This alternative includes 146,667 acres to the west of the MCAGCC, and 21,304 acres to the south. It allows public use of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle recreational areas during periods when there are no training maneuvers, so that for approximately 10 months of the year, the recreational areas will be available.

DREGORY C. DEVEREAUX Chief Executive Officer		BRAD MITZELFELT JENNIFER RUTHERFORD		Board of Supervisors First District Second District JOBIE GONZALES		NEIL O'BERRY GAILLY C. CIVITT Third District Fourth District	
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Response to Comment 1799 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Comment ID: 1799 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 1799 (Page 2 of 2):

Page Two  
Comments on Draft EIS for Twentynine Palms MCAGCC Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment  
May 20, 2011

In terms of airspace and potential effects on County airports, expanded Special Use Airspace (SUA) corridors are proposed. In particular, the "CAX Corridor" would be near the County-operated Twentynine Palms Airport, and would begin at 1,500 feet above ground level (AGL) and go up to 40,000 AGL. Due to the nature of activities taking place within the SUA, varying restrictions are placed on non-military aircraft. MCAGCC Range Control will manage the SUA corridors, and altitudes above the SUA corridors are managed by the Los Angeles Air Traffic Control Center.

Impacts to airspace are not fully detailed in the Draft EIS, and will require further coordination with the FAA. The Draft EIS notes that final determinations will be made by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) working with the USMC after the Final EIS is published.

Please keep us on the mailing list for the Final EIS. We look forward to working with the USMC to support your mission, while retaining the greatest possible opportunities for general aviation users.

Sincerely,



Carrie Hyke, AICP  
Airports Planner  
County of San Bernardino

cc: Mike N Williams, A.A.E., Director of Airports  
Christine Kelly, Director of Land Use Services

**Comment ID** 1800

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am strongly opposed to the closing of OHV areas and public land access in Johnson Valley. The economic and recreational losses would be too much for an already financial depressed region.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1801

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** Several years ago, the Army's Ft Irwin also expanded in size. Since then, because of lack of funding to complete additional studies and to expand infrastructure, only one section of the area to Ft. Irwin that was added is currently in use by the Army. Areas that they considered "critical" for their training, especially to the South are NOT in use. It is also important to note, that this lack of funding for the Army at Ft. Irwin is during OEF when the military is receiving a lot of funding. In a post OEF world, the Marine Corps, with even less funding than it has had in the past will run into the same issues with 29 Palms. The DEIS does not address this issue. If the land is annexed by the Marines, much of it will be able to be put into use because of lack of funding. The DEIS needs to either be completely thrown out, or this issue needs to be added into the DEIS and addressed.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 1802

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** The Desert tortoise section in the DEIS does not address cumulative impacts and mitigation requirements. There needs to be an in-depth study on the effects on the desert tortoise and its environment and also a study done on how much funding this will take.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Cumulative impacts on biological resources (including the desert tortoise) are evaluated in Section 5.4 of the EIS. Cumulative impacts are summarized and potential mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 6 of the EIS. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The EIS has been revised accordingly. Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information.

Noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel. Discussion is included throughout the EIS noting the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for the desert tortoise and other wildlife species (see Section 4.10). While the relative importance of various factors in the decline of the desert tortoise are still uncertain and the EIS states this, the published literature that is available indicates that OHVs do adversely affect tortoises via habitat degradation and direct impacts (one such review is Ouren et al. 2007). Analysis of existing disturbance in the west study area from OHVs indicated a significant correlation between areas of high OHV disturbance and lower desert tortoise densities (refer to Appendix I of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1803
<b>Last Name</b>	Berger
<b>First Name</b>	Bradford
<b>Comment</b>	As I stated in my comments during the scoping period, it is my firm belief that this project is not necessary - especially when compared to the loss of lands critical to wildlife (east portion of the proposed expansion), and critical to recreation (west portion of the proposed expansion). On the east, lands surrounding Amboy crater, Clegghorn Lake, the Sheephole Wilderness, are an important area for the endangered desert tortoise as well as home to bighorn sheep. These lands also act as a corridor to the Joshua Tree National Park. Also, Amboy Road goes through this area and would be a serious loss for those who travel between the Morongo Basin or Coachella Valley (Palm Springs, etc.) and the Las Vegas area of Nevada or

the Mojave National Reserve. On the west, the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) Recreation Area has been a huge part of that area's economic wellbeing. It has been set aside for OHV recreation with a primary purpose of relieving other more sensitive areas from OHV damage. If the Marine base takes this area, the environmental review should include the subsequent damage that will be caused in other areas due to the lack of adequate space for OHV recreation. In closing, it is difficult to see the need for a larger 29 Palms Marine Base. The expansion idea leaves the perception that more is better, but this seems to be too easy an excuse to destroy and/or take lands that are already being used for its proper purpose. Please do not expand the base.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1804

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for

recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1805

**Last Name** Vitrano

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is

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**Comment ID** 1806

**Last Name** O'Dor

**First Name** Shane

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land

Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

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**Comment ID** 1807

**Last Name** casper

**First Name** adam

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred

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**Comment ID** 1808

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson

Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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**Comment ID** 1809

**Last Name** SCHULTZ

**First Name** RICH

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many

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**Comment ID** 1810

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred

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**Comment ID** 1811

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that

the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. In my opinion there is a viable alternative. It considers the vital purpose and need to maintain access to thousands of responsible enthusiasts, that have acted as stewards of this land for decades. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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**Comment ID** 1812

**Last Name** McKinley

**First Name** Jess

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

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**Comment ID** 1813

**Last Name** arnold

**First Name** cam

**Comment**

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**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1814

**Last Name** Chap,an

**First Name** Laurence

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Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1815

**Last Name** Howard

**First Name** David

**Comment** I read with dismay that all 6 proposals of the DEIS will close the Johnson Valley OHV area. Please withdraw the DEIS in favor of a new set of proposals that will include continued responsible use of Off-highway vehicles and there associated economic benefits for the area

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1816

**Last Name** Ruth

**First Name** John

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives

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**Comment ID** 1817

**Last Name** DeJong

**First Name** Shawn

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**Comment ID** 1818

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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**Comment ID** 1819

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need;

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**Comment ID** 1820

**Last Name** Renfrow

**First Name** Ben

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I very often visit Johnson Valley. I am writing to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders including myself, and many others from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. Please withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles.

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**Comment ID** 1821

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

1822

**Last Name**

chambers

**First Name**

darin

**Comment**

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**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1823

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1824

**Last Name** Thurmond

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1825

**Last Name** Carlson

**First Name** Lyle

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. I strongly urge you to keep public lands, for public use.

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**Comment ID** 1826

**Last Name** Stembridge

**First Name** Charles

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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**Comment ID** 1827

**Last Name** Boal

**First Name** Lester

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. As a local rider and frequent visitor to local desert regions, I am disappointed that more of our public

lands are being considered for closure and or more restrictive access. There must be alternatives to closing such a popular recreational area.

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**Comment ID** 1828

**Last Name** Getty

**First Name** William

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**Comment ID** 1829

**Last Name** Jones

**First Name** Russ

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many

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**Comment ID** 1830

**Last Name** Kenney

**First Name** James

**Comment** I implore you to adopt a no action on usurping Johnson Valley for the Marine expansion. As a part of the OHV recreating public, I've watched as millions of acres of land lost to military, urbanization, industry, and wilderness. As the recreational areas shrink, we face added pressure from massive energy proposals, more military expansion, and more wilderness. It will soon appear that the public has no more available access to public land. I think with better planning the Marines could better use the areas they

already have. Johnson Valley is one of the largest and most varied OHV areas in a steadily shrinking recreational opportunity. As more and more population look to recreation from without the cities nearby, this area will become more and more important.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1831

**Last Name** Harsted

**First Name** Ryan

**Comment** As an avid off-highway vehicle enthusiast who has been visiting Johnson Valley for over 20 years and my parents who have been visiting for over 50 years I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Thank you Ryan Harsted

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1832

**Last Name** Bowers

**First Name** Norm

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Norm Bowers

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1833

**Last Name** Eyrich

**First Name** Greg

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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**Comment ID** 1834

**Last Name** Redcher

**First Name** Dan

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**Comment ID** 1835

**Last Name** Reaume

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Certainly the US Marines don't need another area to train on. Why do we have to constantly close public areas?

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1836

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action "...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need..." However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred

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**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1837

**Last Name** Wintz

**First Name** Donald

**Comment** Please consider the tremendous impact of any taking of Johnson Valley! I am someone who recreates in the area, have for many years, and am aware of many others, both locals and throughout the country that will be impacted. Please do not take OUR LAND! Thank you, Donald A. Wintz  
5319 University Dr. Box  
506 Irvine, CA 92612

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID** 1838

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request  
**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-

highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1839

**Last Name** Burreson

**First Name** Derek

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**Comment ID** 1840

**Last Name** Cates

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Closing of Johnson Valley will result in illegal riding, loss of revenue to local retailers, and overuse of lands for recreation. Of course we want our Armed Forces to be able to train, but using this particular area will devastate OHV use. OHVs have very little land to use. Taking what's left will open a huge mess for all.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over

time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1841
<b>Last Name</b>	MORRIS
<b>First Name</b>	DERRICK
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives</p>

that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1842

**Last Name** Cheney

**First Name** Mike

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**Comment ID** 1843

**Last Name** Pritchard

**First Name** Larry

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**First Name** Larry

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**Comment ID** 1845

**Last Name** O'Neill

**First Name** Rob

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**Comment ID** 1846

**Last Name** Winter

**First Name** Chris

**Comment**

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<b>Last Name</b>	jones
<b>First Name</b>	david
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<b>Comment ID</b>	1848
<b>Last Name</b>	Schuster
<b>First Name</b>	Joe
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<b>Comment ID</b>	1849
<b>Last Name</b>	ferguson
<b>First Name</b>	carrie
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
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<b>Comment ID</b>	1850
<b>Last Name</b>	Doling
<b>First Name</b>	Jenny
<b>Comment</b>	<p>DO NOT CLOSE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA: As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
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**Comment ID** 1851

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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**Comment ID** 1852

**Last Name** Doling

**First Name** Richard Doling

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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**Comment ID** 1853

**Last Name** Costello

**First Name** Steven

**Comment** I'm an off-highway enthusiast and I'm writing to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. There are better alternatives to the east of the current base. The Sheephole and Cleghorn Valley wilderness areas should be re-opened and used for the training as they were once training areas and are actually unsuitable for wilderness designation. Just so you know, my father served with the Marines throughout the South Pacific Campaign during WWII and retired as a major. We have always been a family that has supported the USMC. However, an action like closing most of Johnson Valley would permanently damage that relationship. I can't see where taking this land for training a few weeks per year is really necessary. I just can't see the USMC losing an actual battle because they didn't have Johnson Valley to train. If you must use it, train with us there. We can share it; just use electronic simulation weapons while in the open riding area. It will be more realistic to train with innocent civilians around as you would encounter in a real life situation! Johnson Valley is a place where I take my family for both relaxing outings and organized competition. This is what we do for our recreation and this is one of the closest places we can travel to from Orange County to enjoy our sport. You have to realize that for the OHV community closing Johnson Valley is like closing all the golf courses, or little league fields, or high school football stadiums, etc., etc. in Southern California. Radical environmental groups are always trying to push the off-road community out and close off the land. We lose more land every year and add more people to the sport at the same time. Johnson Valley is the crown Jewel of off-road areas and it is a crime to take this land from the public. The impact of this closure (or partial closure) will have huge ramifications for recreation in this area. Yes, there will be a few OHV areas left open, but none are as large and diverse, and the increased use of these

other areas (due to the overflow form no longer having Johnson Valley available) will undoubtedly cause many more problems. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1854

**Last Name** Narz

**First Name** Dylan

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However,

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**Comment ID** 1855

**Last Name** Campbell

**First Name** Vicki

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1856
<b>Last Name</b>	Baumgart
<b>First Name</b>	Robin
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need;&amp; Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

**Comment ID** 1857

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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**Comment ID** 1858

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

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opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1859

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1860

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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**Comment ID**

1861

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

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**Comment ID** 1862

**Last Name** silveira

**First Name** phillip

**Comment** NOBODY wanted to use this area, so we offroaders used it. Now with ohv areas being closed, limiting our right to recreate, another use is proposed for johnson valley. i understand that the marines have a vital mission to fulfill, but there must be another alternative to this, other than eliminating responsible motorized access. Please withdraw the DEIS and develop a new DEIS allowing for continued responsible use of off highway vehicles(ohvs), and recognize the negative economic impact eliminating motorized access would cause to this area. Please do not punish responsible offroaders.

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**Comment ID**

1863

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

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**Comment ID**

1864

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

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**Comment ID** 1865

**Last Name** Kessler

**First Name** Lisa

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not

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**Comment ID** 1866

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

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**Comment ID** 1867

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway

vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1868
<b>Last Name</b>	OConnor
<b>First Name</b>	Liam
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

<b>Comment ID</b>	1869
<b>Last Name</b>	Schneider
<b>First Name</b>	Kurt
<b>Comment</b>	<p>In writing about the purpose and need of the DEIS: I would like to reference <a href="http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las/documents/cna/CNA%20MEB%20Training%20Exercise%20Study%20Identifying%20MEB%20Training%20Requirements%20D0009618%20A1%20Jan04.pdf">http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las/documents/cna/CNA%20MEB%20Training%20Exercise%20Study%20Identifying%20MEB%20Training%20Requirements%20D0009618%20A1%20Jan04.pdf</a> this document: The document is entitled: MEB Training Exercise Study: Identifying MEB Training Requirements On page three of that document it states: "The brigade-sized air- ground force first operated in Korea in the early 1950s. MEBs were formally indoctrinated into the Marine Corps along with the MEU and the MEF in 1962 [3]. Throughout most of the latter half of the 20th century, MEBs activated, deployed, and deactivated as needed. Standing MEBs were the exception rather than the rule. The Marine Corps experimented with permanent MEB headquarters (HQs) from 1985 to 1992. When downsizing and budget reductions required force restructuring, the Marine Corps eliminated the standing MEB HQs and discontinued use of the MEB as a distinct Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF). Instead, fighting was discussed in MEF slices, and the lead echelon of the MEF became the MEF Forward (FWD)..". The key sentence I would like to point out is: "When downsizing and budget reductions required force restructuring, the Marine Corps eliminated the standing MEB HQs and discontinued use of the MEB as a distinct Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF)" Currently, according to General Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps, the Marines are currently DOWNSIZING, about to go under BUDGET RESTRICTIONS, and are currently undergoing FORCE RESTRUCTURING. If the MEB was discontinued last time this happened, it may be discontinued again. Therefore: expansion of 29 Palms is not necessary. If this DEIS is not thrown out or rewritten to take the current actions of the Marine Corps into consideration, at the very least it must be put off until the entire force structure is completed. Currently, the Marine do not know if the MEB will be continued as a distinct MAGTF.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area</p>

is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1870
<b>Last Name</b>	Stevenson
<b>First Name</b>	kevin
<b>Comment</b>	As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate

training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1871

**Last Name** Wasden

**First Name** David

**Comment** I am firmly against this. Save our public lands for our recreational activities.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1872

**Last Name** gray

**First Name** kelly

**Comment** I have enjoyed many many happy campouts in this area, my family included, Id hate to see this go away with all those memories, it would be like losing a part of my personal history.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1873

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Dale

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Best Regards, Dale Johnson

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1874

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Being an Ex-Air Force AGE Tech. I fully understand the military's need for training space. But, as I and many of our military, Active & Ex-Military need our place to unwind, relax, & enjoy ourselves in order to maintain some kind of sanity from the stresses of the many stressful duties in our day to day duties in order to do our jobs correctly & properly to defend our & other countries. Hector R. G.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential

overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1875

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** Once again, I would like to reference this document: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/las/documents/cna/CNA%20MEB%20Training%20Exercise%20Study%20Identifying%20MEB%20Training%20Requirements%20D0009618%20A1%20Jan04.pdf> The document is entitled: MEB Training Exercise Study: Identifying MEB Training Requirements On page 10, the document states: "We used historical MEB deployments and current operating plans or scenarios, in conjunction with future doctrinal concepts and statements, to help define the MEB" At the time this document was written (January 2004), there were no plans for removing Marines from Afghanistan and the Marines had not yet fought in Fallujah. (Which is considered the heaviest urban combat the Marines have been involved in since the Battle of Hue City in 1968.) Therefore, the definition of the MEB according to this document, (which is the pre-cursor to the final document that the reasoning for expanding 29 Palms is based on) is based on what the Marines were doing in the Middle East at that time, and for future possibilities for massive actions like the Battle of Fallujah. With the current state of world affairs, the definition of an MEB should, and most likely will change. The definition of an MEB from this document in January of 2004 is no longer valid. General Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps also recently stated that he does not see much possibility of the Marines putting 20,000 troops on the ground at any time in the near future. Since this document, on which the purpose and need of the DEIS is based on, is no longer valid, especially with the definition of the MEB, The DEIS needs to be discarded until another current MEB training Exercise Study is completed.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a

Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1876
<b>Last Name</b>	Jump
<b>First Name</b>	Robert
<b>Comment</b>	Please use Alternative # 6 No Action, please consider the needs of responsible OHV recreationists & their families, thank you
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1877

**Last Name** Schneider

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** When preparing the website and public documents for the 29Palms Marine Base proposed expansion, the Marines neglected to give the correct mailing address for public comments on the home page of the website, and it is missing from all the public documents including: 1. The Project Briefing Paper 2. The Project Overview 3. The Public Info Brief 4. The Trifold Brochure 5. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) 6. The Contact 7. The Public Comment Link on the home page Instead, the contact info is given only for the project office on the 29Palms Marine Base. The Project Manager, Mr. Chris Proudfoot, has been made aware of this problem, and has not responded to requests for an extension, and an investigation to find out how many public comments have been sent to the wrong address, what has been done with those comments, and what can be done to rectify a mistake that has existed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. NEPA requires and encourages public comment, and the Marines have not given the public the information needed to send in their comments. We need at least a 60 day extension of the comment period during which time they are to conduct an investigation and good faith effort to find out how many comments were submitted to the wrong address. This is a major NEPA violation, and they must rectify this mistake.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1878

**Last Name** blair

**First Name** james

**Comment** As an 10 Year U.S. Navy Veteran and also as an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. This is a very important area to me and my family and one of the few remaining areas close to Orange and Riverside Counties where it is legal for us to ride off highway vehicles. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. There are so few areas remaining in Southern California and many of the larger areas are already too impacted. The most popular areas like Glamis I don't feel is safe for a family with children to teach them to ride after they have their basic training and safety certificates. Johnson Valley is the closest legal place where we have room and enough space to let the kids ride around on trails and across lake beds without worrying about speeding sand rails and trucks. Please consider other areas and leave Johnson Valley and its borders as it currently is. Reducing the area and imposing more restrictions will be a harsh recreational and financial impact on my family and the community in general. As a former instructor in the Navy I recognize the need for representative and realistic training but I am sure there other areas that will not impact a designated recreational area as bad as these options affect Johnson Valley. Sincerely Jim Blair

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1879

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1880

**Last Name** Koch

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** My wife and I are avid off road riders. We love the peacefulness and tranquility of the desert. We have been riding and camping in Johnson Valley for 16 years. My question is, what will happen to the areas that are now protected? The cave drawings, creosote rings, desert tortoise, kangaroo rat, and desert fox. Many of these are protected, and will be destroyed. Let alone the loss to all of the land users. I'm not against training, but I believe there are alot of other open desert areas that can be used for this purpose. I'm a veter TG2T9 purpose.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The EIS has been revised accordingly. Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information. Noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel. Discussion is included throughout the EIS noting the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for the desert tortoise and other wildlife species (see Section 4.10). While the relative importance of various factors in the decline of the desert tortoise are still

uncertain and the EIS states this, the published literature that is available indicates that OHVs do adversely affect tortoises via habitat degradation and direct impacts (one such review is Ouren et al. 2007). Analysis of existing disturbance in the west study area from OHVs indicated a significant correlation between areas of high OHV disturbance and lower desert tortoise densities (refer to Appendix I of the EIS).

Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. Less than significant impacts on Cultural Resources are expected as a result of the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1881
<b>Last Name</b>	Blair
<b>First Name</b>	Tiffany
<b>Comment</b>	None of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. This is very important to my family. This area is one of the few remaining area to ride off highway vehicles that is close to Orange and Riverside Counties. There is are other areas further away from populated areas the military could use. Please leave the Johnson Valley area as is for families to enjoy Sincerely, Tiffany Blair
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-

sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1882

**Last Name** Wootton

**First Name** Louise

**Comment** We feel that the additional land needed is vital for the troops to properly train with the newer and stronger weapons. Louise Wootton

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1883

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1884

**Last Name** Summers

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-

highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1885

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for

decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1886

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There is a minimal amount of public lands set aside for OHV. If a majority of the area is turned over to the military, it will have a negative impact on the free public lands available to US citizens. There are other alternatives that will have a significantly less impact on the OHV community.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1887

**Last Name** KING

**First Name** JON

**Comment** I would like tyou to take the no action alternative. We have already been kicked out of most of the desert. Why not go after Cranstons legecy? Nobody uses it and it should be plenty big enough for your uses. JONTEG

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1888

**Last Name** Chandler

**First Name** Steven

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that

the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. As a tax paying citizen and voter it is time to stop these illegal seizures of "public land" for private uses.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1889

**Last Name** Creel

**First Name** Thurman

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1890
<b>Last Name</b>	Erickson
<b>First Name</b>	Scott
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

**Comment ID** 1891

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson valley recreation area is a valuable area reserved for just that. Important family recreation. Move this military training to any other site and let our children grow up with a place to go. Useless over protected desert lands nearby fill the need for the Marine training as well or better and these lands have already been stolen from the vast majority of the public by the so called "environmentalist" movements of the past few decades and have proven no positive results in doing so.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 1892

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred

alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1893

**Last Name** ROZIER

**First Name** PATRICK

**Comment** PLEASE DON'T TAKE OVER JOHNSON VALLEY. I SPENT MANY DAY'S WITH MY FAMILY RECREATING IN JOHNSON VALLEY AND I WANT MY KIDS,FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO CONTINUE TO ENJOY THE AREA. I HAVE SPENT ALOT OF MONEY ON GAS,FOOD,AND MANY OTHER PRODUCTS ON THE WAY TO JOHNSON VALLEY. WHAT IS THE FINACIAL IMPACT OF MY SELF AND THOUSANDS OF OTHER PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ENJOY JOHNSON VALLEY GOING TO DO TO THE BUSINESSES IN THAT AREA? WHY CAN'T THE MARINES TRAIN AT FORT IRWIN IN BARSTOW? PLEASE DON'T TAKE JOHNSON VALLEY AWAY FROM ALL THE PEOPLE WHO ENJOY THE AREA. REMEMBER THE LAND OF THE FREE.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1894

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please dont close johnson valley. Think about all the families lives and busineeses you will be affecting. We are all hurting financially out here in the country and for some of us this is our family vacation and the only thing we can afford to do.please think about the impact this could have on the people that you protect.Thank You

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development

of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1895

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DONT CLOSE JOHNSON VALLEY

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1896

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DON'T CLOSE JOHNSON VALLEY IT IS WHERE I FIRST LEARNED TO RIDE

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1897

**Last Name** Mahoney

**First Name** Charles

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1898

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please don't take away the one place we can camp and enjoy nature with the family. We have been taking our kids there for years, we still enjoy camping and having a fire, just sitting around and talking. No TV, no video game, just good family fun. Its close to me and all of our friends, a cheap place to get away, Come on pick a different site, thats not so close to the towns that depend on us when we camp. Thank You for listening.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

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**Comment ID**

1899

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

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**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1900

**Last Name** Curl

**First Name** Larry

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**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

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**Comment ID** 1901

**Last Name** Minnick

**First Name** David

**Comment** I am former military (U.S.Army), so I fully understand what is going on. Let me be succinct: the loss of Johnson Valley as a motorized recreational area to the Marine Corps for their training purposes is absolutely catastrophic, and must not be permitted to happen under any circumstances, end of issue!

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential

overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1902
<b>Last Name</b>	De Lannoy
<b>First Name</b>	Mike
<b>Comment</b>	<p>My family has been enjoying a lifetime of camping and OHV recreation in the Southern California local desert, specifically the Johnson Valley OHV area. I'm writing to please support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)- Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the DEIS notes that no action"...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; I believe none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Many campers and users of the desert areas for recreation, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/20/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy</p>

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1903

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The closure of this area to ohv use will cause a profound economic impact on our community and will cause overcrowding of the few remaining areas open to ohv use. This will lead to the closure of those area's and more of our rights as the public to use our lands for recreation. Please consider these points when reviewing the plans to close our public lands. Ed.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1904

**Last Name** Booker

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/20/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1905

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I worked at the TwentyNine Palms Marine Base for little more than a year. The Marines do not use all of the land that have already. From what I witnessed all of the training that they conduct can be accomplished within the boundary of the base that marines already occupy. There is no need for expansion and more waste of federal money to secure johnson valley for training.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1906

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need;

However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1907

**Last Name** Radel

**First Name** Kenneth

**Comment** I am extremely dissappointed to see that closing the Johnson Valley OHV area is something that might happen. Me, my wife, and my son have enjoyed frequenting the OHV area for years. We would be missing out on

the history and beauty of the area if it was ever shut down and it would be ashamed that future generations would not be able to enjoy the same experience that we have been so fortunate to be a part of. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large- Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1908
<b>Last Name</b>	wirt
<b>First Name</b>	rob
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/21/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

**Comment ID** 1909

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** it is truly disappointing that we even have to go through this. There are so many other desert areas throughout the Western United States that the military could use for training that it is discouraging they would pick an area that is so popular and currently gets so much use by people from literally all over the world. Additionally, it is my understanding that the original address to send comments to was incorrect. I wonder how many more thousands of people wrote in that you have not received or considered. In the end, I doubt this will do any good and I believe all of our efforts will be wasted because while it was designed to be a government of the people by the people and for the people, it has truly become a dictating monarchy. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large- Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

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alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

1910

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Sincerely, Nora Lee

**Date Comment Received**

5/21/2011

**Response**

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**Comment ID**

1911

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received**

5/21/2011

**Response**

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**Comment ID** 1912

**Last Name** Olson

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** Dear sirs or Madams, I urge a No Action alternative regarding the proposed Marine Training facility at Johnson Valley. Responsible recreationists have been losing access to long-used and well established recreation areas, without being offered viable alternatives in their stead. Please recognize the many family-friendly recreation opportunities which will be lost should the Johnson Valley be taken away and put under the control of the Military and the Federal Government. I realize the Marine Corps has a vital mission, but it should not be carried out at the expense of even more vital family recreation opportunities. Thank you for your consideration. Sincerely, Eric Olson Santa Cruz, CA

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1913

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1914
<b>Last Name</b>	Armour
<b>First Name</b>	Donna
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Cordially, Donna M. Armour</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/21/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

<b>Comment ID</b>	1915
<b>Last Name</b>	Lofquist
<b>First Name</b>	Verne
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/21/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.</p>

<b>Comment ID</b>	1916
<b>Last Name</b>	White
<b>First Name</b>	Christopher
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. I have been riding with friends and family in Johnson valley for over 40 years, I started there with my father and I now ride there with my children. It is one of the most cherished locations I have ever known and to lose it would be just a rotten shame. There are so few areas left to camp and ride in the Southern California area, please don't close this one! Sincerely, Chris White</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/21/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as</p>

possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1917

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom it may concern, Please do not close the Johnston Valley recreation site as the out door enthusiasts are loosing areas to ride. I believe that we need these areas for our enjoyment. There doesn't seem to be any new places for us to ride. The Marinies can expand to other places is the desert without affecting any other groups. thanks Paul Sezzi

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1918

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1919

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1920

**Last Name** MERCIER

**First Name** FRANCIS

**Comment** I am a frequent user of Johnson Valley OHV, I participate in off roading and rock crawling activities. I am apposed to the Marines taking this land as there is nothing of equal value to be replaced, that we can use. The local area economy's will suffer if this area is annexed. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 1921

**Last Name** Tipton

**First Name** Terry

**Comment** We the people Lucerne Valley CA & Southern CA agreed to closing the surrounding public lands to off road vehicles & in return,we the people would have our public land area of Johnston Valley OHV area for camping & off road vehicle use.The closing of the proposed public lands will be economically crippling to all business in our area.Our property value will

drop significantly causing monetary harm to all land owners in the surrounding area of the proposed 29 Palms Land Acquisition Area. The noise & destruction of our way of life in the desert would be irreparable. There are hundreds of thousands of acres of open land East of 29 Palms Marine Corps Base that if used by our Military would cause little or no harm to the people of our State. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. However, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1922

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To whom this may concern. Please do not take over Johnson Valley and only leave a select amount of acres. This area really keeps my family strong and together as a family unit. There is only so many places to go off road. The Marines are a wonderful group of strong warriors and I want them to have as much training as possible but please move east and not west. Thank you for considering it.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1923

**Last Name** Eckmayer

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** My family has been using the Johnson Valley OHV area for over 10 years now and we enjoy the opportunity it grants us to expose our daughter to enjoyment of the outdoors. It provides the escape from the confines of the concrete landscape that has become southern California. The town of Lucerne Valley I feel will have the most to lose with the expansion due to the fact that the off-road community brings a good amount to their economy. This will also affect the nearby town of Apple Valley, and the 29 Palms/Landers area. The idea of sharing a area in my opinion will not work, with the main concern being safety. The Marines have said that they will not have live fire in the shared area and will only use non-dud producing ordinance, but as has been known this relies on humans and humans are fallible, so I don't see how they can guarantee the public's safety. Therefore my only action I feel should be one of no action. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

**Comment ID** 1924

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** e 29 Palms Marine Base is the largest Marine Base in the WORLD (in squaremiles) and now they want to take over a federally designated OHV area that serves as an area for families, events and is a huge money maker for the businesses nearby. King of the Hammers would be shut down. This will be a disaster!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1925

**Last Name** Begin

**First Name** John

**Comment** Please don't close Johnson Valley down for any reason. this is a OHV location. Marines we love you but please find another location. There are plenty of desert area's you can go, there is not plenty of areas OHV users can go. we were here 1st, don't turn OHV users into military haters by stealing our ride locations. Respectfully yours, John Begin 909-261-6802

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment . The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and

eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID**

1926

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast for over forty years I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert, especially in CA, for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission that I support and am grateful for the freedom that give their lives for me, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received**

5/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public

involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1927

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g.,

Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1928

**Last Name** Boyd

**First Name** James

**Comment** Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment . The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts

that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1929

**Last Name** Kief

**First Name** Jerome

**Comment** After attending the Joshua Tree public hearing I wonder why other alternatives have not been look at. Alternatives 2-5 seamed to be of no concern and only Alternative 1 and 6 seamed to be considered. It feels as though Alternative 1, the overall preferred alternative, will be the route taken in the end. This is a mistake and I feel the persons in charge are not taking enough of the consequences into account. Loss of the Johnson Valley recreation area will decimate the surrounding economies, all very much dependent on travelers. I plead that you consider Alternative 3 or design a new alternative that leaves more of Johnson Valley OHV open year round. The temporary closures will reek havoc on all parties.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1930

**Last Name** Kief

**First Name** Jerome

**Comment** In regards to the Temporary Closures and Dual Use Areas; there is still no full understanding on how long cleanups will take nor how to conduct a Dual Use of the property. There has been no full scale cleanup exercise to judge how long cleanup of the Dual Use Area will take. It is said the closures will be twice a year for one month at a time but this does not include cleanup which could take up to three additional weeks. The rules regarding use of the Dual Use Areas; education, permits, fees... etc. need to be addressed! Not simply brought up for discussion and later decided, after the decision to take Alternative 6 is made. This is a major part of any Alternative. It must be decided before any path is chosen!

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1931

**Last Name** Kief

**First Name** Jerome

**Comment** After speaking in length with 29 Palm Staff at the Joshua Tree Public Hearing there is still little understanding as to why Alternative 3 has not been taken into more consideration. The answer I received over and over was "it's not preferred". This is obvious when talking with any of the "experts" present at the hearing. There is little effort being taken to look into other Alternatives. Alternative 1 has been and will always be the "preferred" alternative by the Marines but as everyone has seen, this is not the preferred alternative of everyone else. Alternative 3 does not impact nearly as many individuals. I ask that you look into better joint "preferred" alternatives.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1932

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** At this time we ask that you give the public a 60 day extension on these proceedings so we can have sufficient time to send in responses to the correct mailing address. Thank You Steve Morrison

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1933

**Last Name** Stuber

**First Name** Donna

**Comment** WHEN I LIVED IN YUCCA VALLEY I ENJOYED THIS AREA SO MUCH AND BROUGHT MY GRANDCHILDREN THERE, ON THEIR ANNUAL VISITS, WHO LIVE IN MASSACHUSETTS AND THEY STILL TALK ABOUT IT. THE GOVERNMENT DOESN'T NEED

ANYMORE LAND, IT'S TIME WE THE PEOPLE ENJOY THE LAND THAT WAS MEANT FOR US TO ENJOY. GOD BLESS YOU ALL!

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training

**Comment ID** 1934

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1935

**Last Name** Heiser

**First Name** Jeri

**Comment** We are family of off-highway vehicle riders and urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. None of the 6 proposed alternatives adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Riders have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. I appreciate that the Marines have a vital mission; but let's find a better way to provide training and not eliminate responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. Citizens need to maintain freedom to pursue happiness on public lands.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1936

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	1937
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Please see attached document. Thank you
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/21/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 1937 (Page 1 of 2)**

**I don't believe the military needs to take the Johnson Valley Off-Highway area for its training. They have stated that it is possible to move eastward for their training and that appears to be the easiest and best answer to this land problem.**

I have come across several articles and quotes from various persons of importance that agree with my opinion or offer additional arguments.

See below:

***The Press-Enterprise, September 18, 2008***

The land includes most of the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area, a 189,000-acre Mecca for motorcyclists and other off-road enthusiasts. It also contains habitat for threatened desert tortoises, bighorn sheep and other wildlife. The area encompasses an array of geological features, such as Bristol Dry Lake, known for its salt mining; Amboy Crater and the surrounding lava fields; and the Sheephole Mountains and Cadiz Valley. It also borders several wilderness areas.

By David Danelski

Officials with the **Center for Biological Diversity**, an environmental group with offices in Los Angeles, said the study area includes habitat needed by desert tortoises and bighorn sheep.

Wildlife and sensitive habitats need to be protected, said Ilene Anderson, a biologist with the group. Land just north of the Johnson Valley OHV area contains habitat for threatened desert tortoises, she said. The reptiles already lost habitat to the 150,000-acre expansion of the Army's National Training Center at Fort Irwin, near Barstow. Land in the Marines' eastern expansion area is an important corridor between wilderness areas for desert bighorn sheep, Anderson said. The animal is not listed as threatened or endangered but its numbers are declining," she said.

**So do we wait till they are gone or do we stop destroying their habitat now?**

**Marine spokeswoman Capt. Amy Malugani said  
"the military would work to minimize its impact on the environment and nearby communities."**

Now how would that occur? Are they going to divert the normal Johnson Valley users to another location near buy besides the Big Bear Valley? How are they going to stop the damage done to the Big Bear Valley due to its overuse by people who would normally be using the Johnson Valley? We have areas in the Big Bear Valley and close surrounding areas that contain endangered plants and animals. How will these areas be kept safe? Is there to be more forestry employees hired to monitor the large quantity of people who will be coming up to Big Bear and are not familiar with the restricted areas? I don't mean one or two additional employees either I am estimating we will need dozens of forestry personnel to keep our restricted areas protected. And will the military be paying these additional salaries seeing as they are the reason they are needed. We don't need any increased taxes for their wants and desires.

**Response to Comment 1937 (Page 1 of 2):**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: 1937 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 1937 (Page 2 of 2):

**Sierra Club Conservation Policies**  
**Military Use of Civilian Airspace and Public Lands**

**Military Training and Testing on Public Lands**

Where military training and testing is authorized on public lands, it should avoid impacting civilian recreational activity. To protect public health and safety, it should occur in areas segregated in space and time from those used by civilians (though, cooperative projects may occasionally be appropriate for such activities as clean up, ecosystem mapping and management, and restoration of damaged areas). Following use of such lands, the military should restore their condition (where possible) and return them to civilian use. Toxics and ordnance should be removed and debris, such as chaff and litter, cleaned up in ways that minimize disturbing natural features.

The public, as well as Congress, should have an opportunity to review and comment on any proposal to authorize military use of public lands. Such use should be authorized only when no viable alternative exists. Such use should only be authorized on a case-by- case basis for a limited period.

The Armed Services and the Defense Department should protect biodiversity and wilderness values on lands affected by their uses. They should be good neighbors and safeguard adjacent lands owned by others from contamination and adverse effects.

**4. Public Participation and Citizen Involvement**

The Defense Department should establish various advisory committees which it should consult prior to making decisions and taking actions related to acquiring land, withdrawals, exchanges, disposals, reservation of airspace, and on policy governing over flights, training exercises on public lands, restoring degraded areas, and managing waste.

Moreover, the public should have opportunities to be involved on such matters through notice and comment procedures, open forums, steering groups, appeal procedures, and other mechanisms provided under NEPA and other laws and regulations applying generally to other federal agencies. Under NEPA, analysis of impacts and alternatives needs to occur before decisions are made and options are foreclosed. *Adopted by the Board of Directors, May 18-19, 1996*

Stephannie Barker  
Big Bear California

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1938

**Last Name** peppel

**First Name** alan

**Comment** need to extend coment period because of marines slip up and keep as much as possible to benifit all

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1939

**Last Name** Buchanan

**First Name** Kenneth

**Comment** I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. I support the Marine Corp. in its mission. The Corp has proven its superiority time and again. To do so requires intense and continuous training. If those facilities do not now exist, then how did the Marine Corp get where it is today? I thank you for your consideration, Kenneth Buchanan

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1940

**Last Name** Nitz

**First Name** Marc

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

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**Comment ID** 1941

**Last Name** McGrath

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** I have been made aware that NEPA requires and encourages public comment, and the Marines have not given the public the information needed to send in their comments. Therefor I am asking for a 60 day extension and that the Marines to do the right thing and give the public the information needed so that they can comment. Brian McGrath - Honor & Integrity

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively

reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID**

1942

**Last Name**

Nescher

**First Name**

Reed

**Comment**

Please extent the time for public comment! Also option #3 is the only acceptable option as we have so little to claim as our own and many have given their lives to protect our rights and freedoms! So going east and south would give the needed room and open up desert for a good cause! A cause far greater than some reptiles and bugs! The area is close to the conditions found in the middle east and IS NOT BEING USED FOR ANYTHING NOW! Please do not take away a family activity and the money it bring into the area! There is so much useless desert sitting idle because of radicals who put "Mother Earth" over all else! Man is the master of his environment and can be a good steward without shutting out the citizens who own it!

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1943

**Last Name** Gerke

**First Name** Joel

**Comment** This is a ridiculous land acquisition in my opinion. If anything, the military should be looking for land away from inhabited areas rather than acquiring areas closer to civilization as this would be. The military should be going the other direction (towards the Mojave/Arizona border) where they are less likely to incur human encroachment.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1944

**Last Name** Quihuis

**First Name** Fabricio

**Comment** alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/21/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1945

**Last Name** Berg

**First Name** Philip

**Comment** My family and I ride OHV and would like to see Johnson Valley stay open to public use. I know the armed forces are important and training is important, there must be an alternative where OHV use is still allowed and the Marine Corp gets there training sites. Thanks You

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1946

**Last Name** schulze

**First Name** brett

**Comment** repeal all actions by [deis] major flaws all expansions need be rejected asap / any land grabbing will force us to ask for the resignation of all politicians involved in this stupidity - i and others vow to have them removed [voted out of office [[fired]] with out pay]if this continues, enough is enough i am pissed beyond reason. get a sac and quit this stupidity now...

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1947

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred

alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1948

**Last Name** Howard

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that

the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions such as me, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1949

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1950

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I understand that the Marines need a place to train, however if they take the Johnson Valley area what are they fighting for ? FREEDOM !!!!! THE BLM HAS ALREADY TAKEN MILLIONS OF ACRES. We as Americans have the right to roam this country as we please and more and more I arrive at a locked gate. The desert is the only place where I can go in California for peace and quiet. My family has been going out there for generations and I would like this tradition to continue. It is unfair to take this OHV area from the people who use it for recreation. It will also impact a billion dollar off road industry in CA which creates jobs and tax money

for the state and the troops. I am against this proposition. Please consider my opinion and look at other areas for our Marines to train at.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment . The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1951

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I use the ohv parks i pay to keep them open and to expand them this area represents a huge percentage of out ohv use areas in california that millions of people pay for the loss will afect me personally and my children personally along with my freinds and there kids if this goes though the entire comunity must be compinsated for our loss the us goverment is in no position to do so nor can they aford to expand the military base at this time and the sarounding areas cant aford to loose the money we spend in there comunities or the loss of jobs that will follow and the public safety issue and enviromental issues of using live fire artilery the lead will poison the ground and the water that millions of people use to drink lead dose not evaporate or dilute or brake down i am grately aposed to the exspantion in to johnson vally ohv park and when the lawsuite is filled you bet my name will be on it

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1952

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We have been an off-roading family for 35 years. We have sadly watched as more and more areas are closed of to exploring with the grandkids. Kids who are exposed to the joys of desert exploration and family togetherness grow up to be great parents themselves. Families are more and more important in this decaying society. Please reconsider closing Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 1953

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is

not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

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**Comment ID** 1954

**Last Name** Brown

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** I am absolutely opposed to this expansion by the USMC into the Johnson Valley Recreational Area. 29 Palms is a huge complex already, and this

expansion is absolutely unnecessary. Johnson Valley is one of few remaining unspoiled areas of its size, and we cannot afford to lose it to "questionable" uses by the Military or private interests. This area is used by outdoors enthusiasts, offroaders and has a very diverse eco-system. This area financially benefits the surrounding communities. Off-roaders benefit California's economy and this State cannot afford the economic loss which closure of this area would bring. I am an off-roader and moved to California in 1997 specifically for the off-roading and natural unspoiled areas remaining available to the Public. This invasion by the USMC is simply WRONG! This action will definately cause further erosion of support for our Armed Forces at a time when several actions overseas are in-question. I do not wish to add my name to the list of those who will certainly loathe the US Military as a result... I'm already too close to feeling that way now. Do we truly want yet another Military expansion when we've already seen so many other bases CLOSE across the USA and Territories? The contradictions of this expansion make no sense whatsoever. I pray that common sense will prevail and stop this unnecessary expansion in its tracks. GOD please protect the few unspoiled areas we have remaining in the USA that are actually accessible to so many surrounding residents. The prospect of long drives to access areas far-away is sickening and financially impossible for several residents already struggling in our economy.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1955

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for

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**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

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**Comment ID** 1956

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** There is plenty of land EAST of the base. Go EAST!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1957

**Last Name** Lavallee

**First Name** Travis

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

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**Comment ID** 1958

**Last Name** lovelady

**First Name** ken

**Comment** why keep taking our riding areas away when our registration fees are supposed to protect these areas what are we paying for.go east marines!

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1959

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a

vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1960

**Last Name** Bauerlein

**First Name** Vincent

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1961

**Last Name** Finkle

**First Name** Michael

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives

that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. The Marine Corps already possesses an enormously large area at Twentynine Palms that has been provided for its use for similar purposes. This additional area "land grab" of public recreational land is absolutely inappropriate!

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1962

**Last Name** Smith

**First Name** Harley

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I would like to voice my opinion about the proposed Marine expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area. I am proud of our military and support them fully but taking the lands in Johnson Valley would be a terrible idea for OHV and the offroad community. The OHV community in general is highly supportive of its nations Armed Forces who fight to keep this country free. Area's including Johnson Valley are just the kind of places our Armed Forces fight to keep open for the country and are enjoyed by thousands of OHV users per year and pumps millions of dollars into the local economy around Yucca Valley and 29

Palms. I would venture to guess the area is also enjoyed by many of the Marines stationed at 29 Palms as well. There is a lot of lands in this area of California that could probably also be used for military training missions that would not be nearly as impactful on the OHV community as well as the local economy. I am from Arizona and after visiting the area with many of the guys in my club for the King of the Hammers offroad race here recently we will be returning again for the race as well as other times just to enjoy the OHV area and use the awesome offroading trails it has to offer. This year for the KOH offroad race our small AZ offroad club had 20-25 members attend with 12-15 offroad vehicles, and all the necessary trucks, trailers, and RV's to get our members and offroad rigs to the lakebed. There were also hundreds if not thousands of other AZ OHV users that made the trip to Johnson Valley for the week long KOH event. To lose this area and this event would be a step in the wrong direction for the USA as well as all the OHV users who frequent the area. Thank You H.S.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be

evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1963

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while

also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1964

**Last Name** DAWSON

**First Name** LUCAS

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Thank you for your consideration of this very important issue.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1965

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE LET US USE THE LANDORS AREA FOR FAMILY FUN

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1966

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE LET US YOUSE THE LANDOR AREA FOR FAMILY FUN

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1967

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1968

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Go east , I went to the meetings and you have a plan to go east with little impact to Johnson valley . Why make so many do with out when you can go east. You say it will be 30 days two times a year pending any problems that will extend that 30 days and there will be problems and you know it , so go east. Thank you, Rich

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1969

**Last Name** Weihe

**First Name** Orion

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

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Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1970

**Last Name** Weihe

**First Name** Orion

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

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Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1971

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** God bless our troops and thank you all for your service. The safety and training of our troops is paramount, however if there is a way to accomplish this without encroachment on the Johnson Valley area my family and I would be very happy. We love off-roading and the freedom of exploring that can only be obtained by vehicle. We hike and mountain bike and enjoy the out doors in many ways. Off- roading is a very unique way to see and enjoy the outdoors that we can't do by any other means. If there is a way Johnson Valley can remain open, please choose that option. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1972

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The expansion of the training area will force OHV users into the only other area available in the location - the El Mirage Dry Lakes. The increase in traffic will adversely affect the local wild and plant life, as well as making what is currently a serene environment, an extremely busy and potentially hazardous one. Considering the expanse of desert available, is it possible for the Marine base to consider a less critical (in terms of location and proximity to local populations) place in which to practice?

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1973

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** my family and I use the desert regularly to camp and ride ohv vehicles. Johnson Valley oHV area is an important part of the quickly dwindling

places we are allowed to ride. We are against any more closures of riding areas and camping areas.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1974

**Last Name** Pinho

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV are in the vicinity of the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I would strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	1975
<b>Last Name</b>	Barmore
<b>First Name</b>	Robert
<b>Comment</b>	The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV are in the vicinity ? the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I would strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation.? C3
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/22/2011
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**Comment ID**

1976

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received**

5/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1977

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** extension, and an investigation to find out how many public comments have been sent to the wrong address, what has been done with those comments, and what can be done to rectify a mistake that has existed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE BASE IN TO JHONSON VALLEY . THANK YOU

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 1978

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** extension, and an investigation to find out how many public comments have been sent to the wrong address, what has been done with those comments, and what can be done to rectify a mistake that has existed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE BASE IN TO JOHNSON VALLEY. THANK YOU

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1979

**Last Name** Sammons

**First Name** Nancy

**Comment** Please give us an extension on the comment time as you published the wrong address...you didn't get many of our comments by having the incorrect address. This is not our fault, please do the right thing. I was out at church in Johnson Valley a few months ago and the noise coming from the base was amazing. Our church is way up on a hill about 4 miles above Old Woman Springs, in the area of Laraha, the windows rattled it frightened the children, the noise was the worse I have heard in a long, long time. I live what is called the Mesa, one side of the street is considered Joshua Tree the other Yucca Mesa, my windows rattle and shake, it feels like we are having an earthquake and it is quite frightening. Pls give us an extension on the expansion issue of the base!

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**Comment ID** 1980

**Last Name** Sammons

**First Name** Nancy

**Comment** we know how important the base is and appreciate what they are doing for all of us, but please don't take all the land out in the Johnson Valley area. People come from all over the country to have fun, enjoy with their families this open country. Can't we work together on a solution for the expansion, can't you go the other direction?? There are so many people that have retired out in the Johnson Valley area and love the scenic views and quietness that it offers. If you take the land you will ruin these peoples enjoyment and retirement years. You need to go out to that area and walk, or sit, or just listen to the noise that is heard when you are bombing out that way....it is terrible. Please consider our needs. We love the Marines we need you for what you do but please try to feel our concerns and needs as well. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will

be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1981

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLease don't close Johnson Valley OHV area. Of the alternatives, only #3 appears reasonable. The impact on recreation and the economy would be huge if any other selection is made. We want you to be able to train and stay safe, but I think expanding eastward and possibly taking over the Cleghorn and Sheephole Valley Wilderness would be best. It would have little effect on anyone other than having congress do the right thing. Your base expansion would be complete. Also we received notice from C.O.R.V.A. that your previous memo to submit comments gave the wrong address. Please issue a 60 day extention for the comment period. Thanks

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 1982

**Last Name** Charette

**First Name** Bill

**Comment** "The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV area in the vicinity of the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I would strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation." Lord knows there is plenty of underutilized land in California that can be converted for training our Marines without bringing them so close to populated areas such as Adelanto or Boron, California.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1983

**Last Name** Pike

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** "The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV are in the vicinity of the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I would strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation."

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 1984

**Last Name** vornran

**First Name** mike

**Comment** As long as the EIS is done by the laws and rules, it is welcome. In the end after all the facts are given, I am hopeful the aquisition will not take place, as it is unnecessary.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 1985

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes

part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	1986
<b>Last Name</b>	Kramer
<b>First Name</b>	Tom
<b>Comment</b>	See attached pdf
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/22/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 1986 (Page 1 of 2)



May 20, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA), representing more than 400,000 members nationwide, submits the following comments in response to U.S. Navy's Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA. Based on the expected annual usage, a Temporary Military Operations Area (MOA) would largely meet the military's requirements while mitigating many of the concerns of general aviation. The proposed action is located in a corridor of high air traffic volume making even a modest expansion problematic. Any expansion westward will compress civilian air traffic operating between southern California and points east. However, several opportunities exist to improve the planned airspace action in Alternative 2 that would further mitigate the impact on general aviation.

**Temporary MOA could accomplish goals**

The Executive Summary states that the purpose of the proposed action is to permit Marine Expeditionary Brigade exercises which will take place twice a year for 24 days per event. For a training activity that occurs so infrequently, a Temporary MOA would address the military's need for training airspace while substantially reducing the impact on general aviation. Because real-time special use airspace status updates are not currently available, pilots must rely on charted times of use. According to a recent survey by AOPA, 67% of pilots circumnavigate special use airspace regardless of its activation status due to the lack of timely and reliable information. It seems that the full time establishment of special use airspace (SUA) is extreme considering the MOA would be inactive 87% of the year.

AIR-1

**Insufficient altitude for transiting traffic**

The Twentynine Palms Special Use Airspace (SUA) complex is uniquely located in a major air traffic corridor. Pilots attempting to fly between southern California and points east will likely attempt to fly under the CAX MOA east of R-2501. The proposed CAX MOA floor of 1,500 feet does not provide sufficient room for bi-directional traffic and offers questionable margins for a safe maneuvering altitude in mountainous terrain. AOPA requests that the floor of the proposed CAX MOA be raised to a minimum of 4,000 feet to address these issues. If such an increase is not possible, AOPA requests that the CAX MOA be subdivided into a low and high sector so that only those areas essential to a specific training event be activated at any given time.

AIR-2

Given the configuration of the Sundance, CAX, and Turtle MOAs, AOPA requests that the boundaries be amended to permit through traffic to utilize the increased floor height of the CAX MOA corridor. Specifically, by relocating the eastern boundary of the Sundance MOA further west, civilian traffic would have access to the corridor under the CAX MOA.

AIRCRAFT OWNERS AND PILOTS ASSOCIATION

Response to Comment 1986 (Page 1 of 2):

AIR-1, AIR-2, AIR-3, AIR-4:

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Comment ID: 1986 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 1986 (Page 2 of 2):

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
Page 2  
May 20, 2011

**Soaring Operations over Blackhawk Mountain and Twentynine Palms Airport**

In addition to transient traffic operating between southern California and points east, the eastern portion of Blackhawk Mountain is a popular soaring location and serves as both a launch point and a way point for soaring flights heading east. Any expansion of the Twentynine Palms SUA Complex westward will encroach on this active soaring area. Alternative 2 offers the smallest westward expansion and with the use of a Temporary MOA would mitigate the soaring community concerns to a large extent.

AIR-3

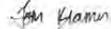
**Summary**

AOPA recognizes and supports the U.S. Marine's need to train as they fight. The Twentynine Palms SUA complex, with some modifications, represents a unique training asset for the U.S. Marines that could result in meeting the Marine's training needs while mitigating the impact on general aviation flight operations. The use of a temporary MOA in place of charted special use airspace will substantially improve efficiency and access for general aviation while providing the needed training airspace for U.S. Marines. Increasing the floor of the CAX MOA to 4,000 feet will mitigate the impact on transient traffic between southern California and points east.

AIR-4

We appreciate the opportunity to submit comments on the Twentynine Palms DEIS.

Sincerely,



Tom Kramer  
Manager, Air Traffic Services

**Comment ID** 1987

**Last Name** Williams

**First Name** Ben

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1988

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** “The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV are in the vicinity” the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I would strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation.”

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

<b>Comment ID</b>	1989
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	<p>All DEIS Alternatives Would Restrict Access As you have no doubt heard by now, the United States Marines are seeking to establish a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California. To this end a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) has been released. Comments will be accepted until Thursday, May 26th. The DEIS analyzes 6 alternatives for potential impacts to land use, recreation, public health and safety, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, water resources and other resources. The preferred alternative is alternative 6. The DEIS can be viewed here. Unfortunately, any of the proposed alternatives, including the Marines' preferred alternative, will ultimately result in the loss of OHV access and possibly a complete closure of the Johnson Valley OHV area. Please review the DEIS and submit comments by filling in the attached webform found here. You can cut-and-paste the following or insert your own comments. Either way it is imperative that you weigh in before the comment period closes on May 26! Suggested Comments: As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.</p>
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/22/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy</p>

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1990

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. and our families and children won't have an area to ride their motorbikes. thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1991

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-

highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 1992

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Any expansion of the MCAGCC will have a negative impact on desert wildlife, regardless of the measures the Marines take to mitigate the damage, and any expansion of the training airspace will have a negative impact on the desert's solitude, regardless of the measures the Marines take to mitigate the damage. However, that damage has already been done in another nearby location--Fort Irwin. It's astounding how closely the Marines' request for base expansion now echoes the Army's request of a few years ago. Here are a few quotes from that Army request. "To meet the training needs of the Army today and in the foreseeable future, the NTC needs to expand to accommodate new tactics and doctrines, and to allow our soldiers to train in the most realistic environment possible. The land expansion will provide an expanded battle-space (land and airspace) environment for training Army brigade-sized ground and air units according

to the Army's training and combat operations doctrines. The training doctrine calls for training to be conducted in as realistic a battle-space environment as possible." And: "The operational experience from Operation Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom has also confirmed the need to train heavy mechanized units in larger, brigade-sized assemblages, spread out over large land areas. The current available maneuver area at the NTC is not adequate to realistically support the increased distance and pace of today's tactical operations or today's brigade-sized units." The Marines have stated that they have examined Fort Irwin and found it unsuitable, but it was expanded according to the Marines' requirement (though they did not know that at the time, of course.) With a few compromises here and there, the Marines could use a base capable of hosting brigade-sized maneuvers. That base already exists, and it has the same landlord--the Department of Defense--as MCAGCC. Using a facility that already meets most of the Marines' requirements, is nearby, and has already recently expanded is a win-win situation for everyone, especially the quiet, wildlife-filled area surrounding the combat center. PS: I attended the public meeting in Ontario, and I was impressed with the courteous, professional, and well-educated responses to all my requests for information. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1993

**Last Name** Simmons

**First Name** Susan

**Comment** I respectfully request "no action" be taken as the land expansion alternative. With the preferred method, the Marine Base will be taking some of the best Southern California off-road areas away from the public. These areas have been used for decades by thousands of individuals for recreation. We, as a family, have enjoyed going to the Johnson Valley off-road area to camp and 4-wheel for years. It has unified us as a family in a way that is irreplaceable and priceless. It will be a sad day if this area is taken away.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1994

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for

recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1995

**Last Name** Eannetta

**First Name** Terry

**Comment** Please do not close off Johnson Valley to OHV use.

**Date Comment Received** 5/22/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 1996

**Last Name** Gil

**First Name** John

**Comment** Johnson Valley is the only place of it's kind for off road recreation and racing. Taking this area away for any reason will impact thousands of users and businesses. Leave Johnson Valley as it is. In the event this is not possible, acre for acre mitigation would the only acceptable alternative. As a patriotic American, I understand the need to continually improve our armed forces. It seems that other options are open to the Marines. Johnson Valley is my Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Niagra Falls...

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined

that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 1997

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as

possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1998

**Last Name** Belk

**First Name** Curtis

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 1999

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** as a use of many areas of the desert off roading, land speed racing, camping i oppose any closure of public lands i would prefer marines exercise at the mexican border this could accomplish double benefit for all americans as one look of an american soldier will keep illegal from jumping the fence

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2000

**Last Name** Casteel

**First Name** Chris

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement – Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for

recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2001

**Last Name** Hundtoft

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** We come to California every winter to enjoy the OHV opportunities Johnson Valley offers. We race in the D-37 races and really do not want to see this area closed. It would be okay if there were an alternative, but since there is no alternative, NO WAY! I spent lots of time in the military in that general area and it seems that there is already enough space dedicated to training.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 2002

**Last Name** Van Dyke

**First Name** Donadl

**Comment** As a former US Army soldier who served in Desert Shield/Storm I realize the need for expanded training areas. However I do not understand why NAVFAC SW wants to take this area away from the general public. Is it because it is the path of least resistance? I have been utilizing this recreational are for 18 years with my family and friends. Due to the fact this state already has limited areas such as this available to the public I do not see the justification in NAVFAC looking to take it. I hope that another alternative can be found. It will be a sad day for the offroad community if this area is taken away. I beleive that maby of the general public that use this land feel this way. I hope that the lack of other areas such as this one for public use is taken into consideration in this matter. Thank for for receiving my comment, Donald Van Dyke

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment . The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2003
<b>Last Name</b>	Voyer
<b>First Name</b>	Dean
<b>Comment</b>	<p>As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Thank you, Dean Voyer</p>

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2004

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Every Christmas we go riding and shooting rockets off at Soggy Dry Lake. This is one of the only places in Ca where both activities are possible. Currently most riding spaces are already gone due to home development. The military already has two large bases in this area. It would be a shame to close off another area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2005

**Last Name** Lawson

**First Name** Andy

**Comment** I understand the need for more room to train, but lets move it out to the other side of the coxcomb area to were patton trained. would solve a lot of issues.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2006

**Last Name** Wing

**First Name** Frederick

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreation. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Thank you. Frederick Neal Wing

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2007

**Last Name** Langness

**First Name** Ed

**Comment** There continues to be a reduction in open space that is available to the public. As the population grows, open space becomes more and more valuable. The closure of open space results in overcrowding of the remaining off road areas, causing an increase in accidents. When riding options are limited, it is only human nature to look for something new and interesting. This will increase the number of riders who travel off of developed trails or ride in areas that are closed to OHV use. As an Eagle Scout, an OHV enthusiast, a 20 year member of the Sierra Club, and father of two children, I oppose the expansion of the Marine Base at Twenty Nine Palms. Please keep the land available to public access for future generations to enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2

of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2008
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives

that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2009

**Last Name** Sharp

**First Name** Glenn

**Comment** Suggested Comments: As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large- Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 2010

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an OHV user I feel that your "need" for more land is very selfish. This is not probable to remove 180 thousand acres from the use of the public. OHV areas aren't bountiful and taking one of the best ones in the country would be extremely unbelievable.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see

Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 2011

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2012

**Last Name** Evans

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** I am writing this comment as a concerned OHV enthusiast. Recreation opportunity in California is vanishing at an alarming rate. Johnson valley is an important riding area to me. I want to make sure that the no action taken alternative is picked. California's loss of recreation areas is hurting the economy in many ways. Sales of OHV's Sales of accessories, Truck and RV sales. Fuel and supplies sales,(I spend about \$1000.00 dollars in the local area every time I go). We need to preserve these places so we can take our children and grandchildren. OHV use is a family event that helps build bonds and brings people together. I don't want this area to become like fort Ord in monterey. Due to live explosives being left behind most of that place is now un fit and un safe to use. My family will never be able to use those lands like they once could. Please, I urge you to take no action in johnson valley and leave things the way they are.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific

portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2013

**Last Name** Witteman

**First Name** Linda

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2014

**Last Name** Witteman

**First Name** Steve

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2015

**Last Name** Orre

**First Name** Erik

**Comment** First & foremost, I thoroughly support the mission of the USMC and our other Armed Forces. Training is essential. I have been responsibly enjoying the Johnson Valley OHV since I was a child in the early 1970's. Now, my children are also enjoying this wonderful area. My 7 year old son just learned to ride a motorcycle during our latest excursion to Johnson Valley OHV on the weekend of 4/2/2011. This is an experience he and I will never forget. As a member of a OHV Riding Club, I consider us true environmentalists. We take care of the land because we want to continue to enjoy it. There must be an alternative to that the USMC can choose over removing this wonderful land from public use. Thank you very much.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2016

**Last Name** Colwell

**First Name** Matt

**Comment** Suggested Comments: As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large- Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2017

**Last Name** Leonhardt

**First Name** Craig

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2018
<b>Last Name</b>	Ripaldi
<b>First Name</b>	Carl
<b>Comment</b>	Please note my attached letter regarding the Marine Base Expansion
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/23/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2018 (Page 1 of 5)

May 23, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command,  
Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Gentlemen:

I am submitting these comments on the Draft EIS for the Marine Base Expansion in 29 Palms.

I am a property owner in Johnson Valley. I have a renovated Homestead Cabin which I use on weekends and also rent out to desert vacationers.

I have reviewed the document and have the following comments:

**CEQA:**

I question why there is no explanation in the document as to why there is no Environmental Impact Review under CEQA for the project. There is mention in the document of acquisition of private and state lands. There is mention of the need to build new roads and install gates at existing roads into the OHV areas. There is mention that the construction of the Communications Towers may require that "authorities acquire easements, lease, permit or...to construct the communications tower". The OHV lands that will be confiscated for the expansion are currently under the supervision of the California Department of Parks and Recreation/Off Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. There must be agreements between State Parks and BLM regarding the use and oversight of these lands. If surrender of these lands involves alteration or suspension of these agreements, that might constitute an action on the part of a State Agency that triggers CEQA.

If any of these required actions are on the part of State or County agencies, then that means that a CEQA review of the project would be necessary.

Why then is there no mention of CEQA in the EIS document? This needs to be addressed.

**NOISE:**

The noise sections are most misleading and gravely flawed. The models used evaluate and predict averaged noise projections for the aircraft and ordnance explosions. The Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) metrics used in

NEPA-1

NOI-1

Response to Comment 2018 (Page 1 of 5):

**NEPA-1:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has met with the State of California to discuss CEQA requirements for state actions that could be undertaken following the project decision. State agencies are encouraged to use NEPA documents when such documents comply with CEQA. To the extent practicable, the EIS has incorporated CEQA requirements to allow state agencies to utilize the EIS analysis to support any future project-specific analyses that may be required by CEQA.

**NOI-1:**

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single-event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts.

**BIO-1:**

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

Comment ID: 2018 (Page 2 of 5)

the document are "daily noise metrics". That means that the individual aircraft flyovers, bombings and ordnance and gunfire noise have been averaged over a 24 hour period. People will hear these explosions gunfire and aircraft bombings as individual events not a 24 hour average!

This noise data therefore needs to be expressed in "Lmax" decibel amounts for the residents living in proximity of the combat training sites. Otherwise the noise impacts will be significantly underestimated. "Lmax" is the metric used to measure individual noise events. Bombs and ordnance explosions should be measured as individual noise events. None of this data is provided in the DEIS.

Use of the CCNEL is misleading. You can use this metric when measuring noise from a highway which tends to be steady and perceived as a constant drone. This is not the case with bombs and explosions. You cannot average the noise coming from bombs exploding or helicopters flying over your house. Because that is an individual noise event! We want to know what the individual bomb decibel readings are going to be.

Furthermore, the EIS indicates that the plan is to explode more than a million rounds of munitions ground to ground and more than 1.5 million rounds air to ground during the various exercises each year. These explosions are to be squeezed into two one month training exercises each year. The EIS projects that 22% of that will be detonated from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm and 16% will be detonated from 10:00 pm until 7:00 am. Night-time noise has a more significant impact than daytime because of the quieter night time noise conditions. Typically night time noise ordinances require reduction of noise because of the increased sensitivity of resident to noise during the evening hours. There is no analysis of this increased noise impact during the evening hours presented in the EIS document.

Again this is entirely misleading to the public. The bombings and explosion of ordnance and gunfire accompanied by airplanes and helicopters will destroy the lives of residents in the vicinity of the base expansion denying us the peaceful enjoyment of our property.

The EIS needs to provide the "Lmax " noise levels from the sites of the combat exercises. The EIS also needs to determine how far away the combat exercises need to be to so that the "Lmax" noise levels are diminished to the CCNEL levels of 62 decibels which are presented in the DEIS as the acceptable noise level under the CCNEL.

This might restrict the combat exercises to a distance of twenty miles from the sensitive receptors. This might disallow evening combat exercises. If so, so be it!

NOI-1

Response to Comment 2018 (Page 2 of 5):

CR-1:

Sections 3.12 and 4.12 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

SOC-1:

As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and low-income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations*): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. All environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice.

Comment ID: 2018 (Page 3 of 5)

**VIBRATIONS:**

The draft EIS makes no mention of vibration impacts!

Ground born vibrations will be generated by the combat activities of bombs, ordnance explosions and gunfire. Currently, I can feel the vibrations from combat training activities at the existing marine base which is more than 20 miles away. The EIS needs to present what the vibration levels will be coming from the planned base expansion combat training activities.

The vibration impacts are likely to be significant and extremely annoying. They will feel like earthquake tremors and may pose risk to residential structures. Also a significant portion of the vibration impacts will be experienced in the evening combat exercises. The EIS needs to address this issue with a detailed analysis and modeled projections of vibration impacts on the community.

**BIOLOGICAL IMPACTS:**

The EIS clearly states that it will significantly impact Desert Tortoise. Tortoises will be bombed, and run over and their habitat destroyed. The EIS does not address the trauma that the tortoises will experience from the noise and vibrations resulting from the bombing of ordnance and gunfire during the combat training exercises. This needs to be addressed. The trauma might prevent the tortoise from mating or nesting and have a further deleterious impact on their dwindling population. This should not be allowed.

Why are the regulations written to protect endangered species being over-ridden by the Marines expansion objectives? How is this justified?

**SECTION 106:**

There is no discussion of the Homestead Valley Communities in the EIS. Johnson Valley and the other Homestead Communities were founded under the Jack Rabbit Homestead Act or Small Homestead Act of 1939. As such they can be considered eligible for historic status under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act since their creation is associated with an Act of Congress. There should be a discussion of this. Note that these communities do not need to be determined to be Historic in order for the reviews to be required under Section 106. Mere eligibility qualifies them for consideration under Section 106.

There should be discussion and analysis of the impacts of highway and traffic development, light, noise, vibrations and air quality degradation that will impact these communities. All these impacts to the Homestead Communities might be significant and need to be addressed. Keep in mind that the noise section of the DEIS is flawed and cannot be applied as presented to a Section 106 analysis.

NOI-1

BIO-1

CR-1

Response to Comment 2018 (Page 3 of 5):

**REC-1:**

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**REC-2:**

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Comment ID: 2018 (Page 4 of 5)

Response to Comment 2018 (Page 4 of 5):

Once the noise section is properly corrected to reflect "LMax" noise levels from the bombs and exploding ordnance then the direct impacts of noise and vibration could be assessed regarding its impacts on these historic homestead communities.

CR-1

**ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE:**

The environmental justice provisions of NEPA require that the proposed project not disproportionately impact disadvantaged or minority communities. Right now the EIS is flawed because it understates the environmental impacts from the project in categories such as noise and vibrations, air quality, traffic, local economics.

Johnson Valley residents are mostly elderly and of below average income. They qualify as disadvantaged. The EIS needs to complete a thorough analysis of the impacts of the project on this community under the NEPA provisions of environmental justice.

SOC-1

Because the EIS analyses are flawed in areas such as noise and vibration impacts, the elderly and those of lower income are more likely to be significantly impacted because they are more sedentary and less likely or able to avoid, or move away from the area of significant impacts such as noise and vibrations.

This needs further analysis.

**RECREATIONAL IMPACTS:**

The proposed project is going to take away from the public domain the majority of the Johnson Valley OHV lands ( over 56%) dedicated for recreational use. These lands are heavily used and the adjacent communities derive significant percentages of their income from the OHV folks. These lands cannot be replaced or mitigated with other desert lands farther away. Johnson Valley is a convenient weekend escape for OHV recreation. OHV areas farther away are too distant for a weekend trip and would cost significantly more to reach with increasingly expensive fuel costs we are currently experiencing. Therefore the proposed base expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV lands will significantly reduce the opportunity for families to escape the megalopolis for a weekend of recreation.

REC-1

No mitigation is proposed. The EIS does not present a legitimate explanation as to why these recreational lands need to be confiscated from the public.

REC-2

Thank you for your attention to these matters of significance that must be addressed in the EIS.

Comment ID: 2018 (Page 5 of 5)

Response to Comment 2018 (Page 5 of 5):

Sincerely yours,

Carl Peter Ripaldi  
Principal Environmental Specialist  
Los Angeles County Metro

310 741-1924

[ripaldic@metro.net](mailto:ripaldic@metro.net)  
[ripaldi2001@yahoo.com](mailto:ripaldi2001@yahoo.com)

**Comment ID** 2019

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2020

**Last Name** Bothwell

**First Name** Glenn

**Comment** My family and I frequently visit the Cougar Butte and Soggy Dry Lake riding areas. The desert is beautiful especially during sunrises and sunsets. The flowers when in blume are beautiful as well. We urge you to keep Johnson Valley OHV riding area open for all off road enthusiasts to enjoy. Thank you! Glenn & Ruth Bothwell

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2021

**Last Name** Mesarchik

**First Name** Dana

**Comment** I would like the area to continue to serve the needs of the OHV community.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the

Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2022

**Last Name** Bechard

**First Name** Holli

**Comment** I would like to comment on the public meeting, I believe the Marines and the off road community can work together, and I look forward to it. I believe using the only option, option 4 will be the best to work together in the future. I believe if the sport promoters and the Marines get together before any new racing year, the schedule and maps can be pre-done to help everyone. I would like to be a part of this program and would like to be a voice for the outdoor community. Please take everyone's choice into consideration. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Once a decision has been made, the Marine Corps would implement communication and notification procedures as outlined in the EIS, to maintain a steady and persistent engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and agencies during future management planning.

**Comment ID** 2023

**Last Name** Tiffany

**First Name** Tom

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is

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**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

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**Comment ID** 2024

**Last Name** Bosso

**First Name** Anthony

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and

the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public. There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on

limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2025

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Ladd

**Comment** s an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2026
<b>Last Name</b>	Silverberg
<b>First Name</b>	Kane
<b>Comment</b>	As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from

adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2027

**Last Name** King

**First Name** John

**Comment** I submitted comments during the first scoping period and attended one of this years meetings. I own airport FAA designator 7CA1 (Abraham Airport) in Johnson Valley. In response I see that the proposed land acquisition area was moved northward and eastward from my airport and the neighboring airports 2CAS (B&E) and 51CA (Kelly). I then studied the proposed airspace proposal for choice 6. It places my airport underneath the restricted

airspace. I did observe the proposal to have a 1500 AGL shelf over my airport. I am familiar with the ridges of land to the north and south of my airport. I have studied the proposed exercise area and it is beyond those ridges I believe. I am not aware of any restricted airspace that has a shelf underneath it. I further do not know how the FAA would chart this shelf airspace since it is described in the study to be defined as underneath the restricted area but outside the proposed land acquisition area which has a very jagged boundary. I also do not know how pilots could navigate this shelf and how GPS manufacturers would display it. I therefore would suggest that the land acquisition boundary and restricted airspace be located three miles from any airport.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 2028

**Last Name** Preuitt

**First Name** Don

**Comment** Save our land for the public use, our family loves going to Johnson Valley for camping, hiking and motorcycles.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development

of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2029

**Last Name** Enstrom

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** I fully support our military, but being disabled I can't hike and must use a four wheel drive to our base country. I don't want to lose this. Please find another option for testing. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2030

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need;

However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2031

**Last Name** Dunn

**First Name** Kimberly

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine

Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

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**Comment ID** 2032

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement – Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 2033

**Last Name** Richards

**First Name** Roy

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2034

**Last Name** Richards

**First Name** Roy

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2035

**Last Name** Swedlund

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** Please leave Johnson Valley open. It's a family destination.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2036

**Last Name** leseney

**First Name** troy

**Comment** i would like to request an extension of 60 days due to innacurate mailing address,,,also has anyone looked into the impact of the triops that grow in the desert rain pooled water at the levy on the dry lake bed ?

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings

before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified. Please see Section 4.10 of the EIS for information on expected impacts to Biological Resources.

**Comment ID** 2037

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I am urging you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. Since none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. While I do support the Marines and recognize their sacrifice and the importance of their training there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. Therefore I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the

minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2038

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 2039

**Last Name** curry

**First Name** pat

**Comment** Now is the time to stop this madness and not continue taking our public recreational land away. Year after year more of our land ( Not the governments land) away. Please consider that we the people do not want our land stolen by the government.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2040

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The access to recreational areas for OHV is in the process of being restricted or prohibited in so many areas that there are not many left. Off-roading and wilderness recreation is an important part of our lifestyle. Please make sure that you do not close any more areas for wilderness recreation and off-roading. Thank you very much!

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2041

**Last Name** Johnson

**First Name** Dave

**Comment** It is unconscionable that the federal government is still considering taking more of our public lands for thier own use, especially on the heels of the death of the man that created our militaristic expansion. I understand the reason for needing to expand the Twentynine Palms training facility was to

more closely mimic the distances our forces would be required to traverse during battle in the middle east. It appears the need for this type of training is no longer necessary since our presence in Iraq and Afganistan is lessening. The average citizen is continually asked to make sacrifices while the decicion makers continue to run the country into the ground. I am a regular user of the Johnson Valley Recreation Area; Please allow me and future generations the freedom to continue to enjoy one of California's great open spaces by not expanding the Twentynine Palms Training facility. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a current Marine Corps training requirement. In addition to the high deployment tempo in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Marine Corps must maintain high proficiency for other vital Marine Corps missions, including combined arms maneuver at the MEB level. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2042

**Last Name** reeves

**First Name** ronald

**Comment** my family was rasised rding in johnson valley for the last 28 years.its a god family enviornment.don't close .thanks

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2043

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public

involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2044

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I think the Johnson Valley off road area should be left alone. The Marines could find land somewhere else. I enjoy taking my family to the Johnson Valley area to ride and have done so for many years, and I would like to continue that. There is plenty of desert out there that they can take, why does it have to be an area that already has a designated use? If they take that area, it will only make other areas more crowded and dangerous. This just isn't right. Being an offroader, we already have worry about the environmentalist, now we have to worry about the Marines wanting us to give up our riding areas. Please leave Johnson Valley alone.....PLEASE.  
Mike Acosta

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2045

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while

also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2046

**Last Name** Moutes

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** I feel the military has no real need to take more public land. In these touch economic times you will be the cause of local business to fail and hinder any economic recover that area has made. I have been a recreational user of the California desert for over forty years and have seen our public lands shrink for mainly political reasons. The areas left have such concentrated use that we do not even try to go out and enjoy them on holiday weekends due to the crowds. Please DO NOT consider this proposal so that the future generations can have this special place to enjoy.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2047
<b>Last Name</b>	Williamson
<b>First Name</b>	John
<b>Comment</b>	I oppose the proposed enlargement of the current operation area. My opposition is based on dwindling land use opportunities for the tax paying Americans that use our national lands. The very thought of increasing the land size while the actual size of the new generation of weapons being deployed is shrinking is ridiculous.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/23/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2048
<b>Last Name</b>	Carlisle
<b>First Name</b>	Patrice

**Comment** I come from a military family and honor the work that has taken place to give me my freedom. I am against alternative 6 the expansion of Twentynine Palms west towards Johanson Valley. I support expanding towards the east where the impact will be felt less. Families have enjoyed riding Johanson Valley and the spectacular scenery provides a environment for them to bond. There are homes in the area where the occupants have choicen a reclusive lifestyle. Please do not take this area away from those who enjoy it. Patrice Carlisle

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2049

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2050

**Last Name** Pope

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

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**Comment ID** 2051

**Last Name** Mathers

**First Name** Richard

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives

that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2052

**Last Name** Pellanda

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** I am very upset that you guys are taking land away from the landers Jhonson valley area. That land is sacred to the off road community they're very little places to offroad and race in southern California. We have four generations of family that have been going every Thanksgiving, new years, and easter for the last ten years. The economic impact for small business will be huge, My business will take a huge down turn is this area is taken. So please take everybody opinion seriously because once you take this land away we will not get any in return, and this land will be taken away for ever.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2053

**Last Name** Pellanda

**First Name** Jason

**Comment** I am very upset that you guys are taking land away from the landers Jhonson valley area. That land is sacred to the off road community they're very little places to offroad and race in southern California. We have four generations of family that have been going every Thanksgiving, new years, and easter for the last ten years. The economic impact for small business will be huge, My business will take a huge down turn is this area is taken. So please take everybody opinion seriously because once you take this land away we will not get any in return, and this land will be taken away for ever.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be

available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2054

**Last Name** connet

**First Name** mike

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson

Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

2055

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

The 29 Palms Marine Base is the largest Marine Base in the WORLD (in square miles) and now they want to take over a federally designated OHV area that serves as an area for families, events and is a huge money maker for the businesses nearby. King of the Hammers would be shut down. This will be a disaster!! PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2056

**Last Name** Dell

**First Name** Alex

**Comment** Off road riding/driving is a recreation enjoyed by thousands of people mostly from the southern California area. Restriction or closure of the Johnson Valley off road area would have a serious effect on people's ability to enjoy the outdoors with their families. The knock on effect would cause a ripple through the entire off road industry, from RV dealers to motorcycle dealers, to tire suppliers etc. This is a very popular off road area, please keep it open as is with no modification for anything other than off road recreation. Our military already has plenty of land to practice on.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and

direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2057
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Aesthetic/Visual resources, Air quality, Airspace/Air traffic, Biological resources, Cultural resources, Environmental justice, Hazardous materials/wastes, Land use, Mining/Minerals, Noise, Recreation, Socioeconomic, Water resources, Public health and safety
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/23/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. These topics are discussed in detail throughout the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2058

**Last Name** McCoy

**First Name** James

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Corps has rigged "the purpose and need section" of this NEPA process to limit the range of alternatives. The Corps has failed to consider a reasonable range of alternatives analyzed during a NEPA process. The Corps EIS fails the "rule of reason" test. The "rule of reason" is essentially a reasonableness test that is comparable to the arbitrary and capricious standard. The Corps Failed to Justify Need for 1990s-era Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs The Corps excluded the use of Fort Irwin based on false assumptions that scheduling conflicts, current infrastructure deficiencies, and other administrative hurdles cannot be mitigated. The arbitrary screening criteria eliminated a number of viable proposals and alternatives brought forward by the public There is Corps Bias Against Integration - On March 26, 2011 Corps spokesman, Captain Nick Mannweiller, told the BLM's Desert Advisory Council that, "What makes the Marine Corps special is that we play really well with each other and not really very well with the other services." The Corps Failed to Analyze DOD Budget and National Deficit Impact on Project Viability

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB- sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and

sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2059
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Noise will be loud. Mining/Minerals. Land use. Airspace/Airtraffic. Aesthetic/Visual resources. Cultural resources.Recreation Public health and safety
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/23/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. These topics are discussed in detail throughout the EIS. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2060

**Last Name** Davis

**First Name** Gina

**Comment** I have been going to El Mirage for 10 years and it would be awfull if this would to happen. Please Save El Mirage

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2061

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep this land open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2062

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Keep this land open to the public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2063

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please go east and leave the Johnson Valley OHV alone. A lot of disabled old timer veterans, including MARINES, use this as their ONLY way to enjoy the outdoors. They can not hike or walk or ride a bike. The 4x4 takes them to heaven here and now on earth. Everything we fight for, our freedom - this is IT and what it's all about for some people. Please.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2064

**Last Name** Lyon

**First Name** James

**Comment** The expansion of the 29 Palms Marine training area would force the current OHV users into the remaining OHV are in the vicinity of the El Mirage Dry Lake. This would adversely affect the native wild and plant life, as well as multiply the number of people using an increasingly limited amount of space available for public recreation. I strongly urge the Department of the Navy to consider other options that are not as close to centers of population and critical to the careful management of natural resources and public recreation. Thank you for your support.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2065

**Last Name** Busick

**First Name** Gilbert

**Comment** I would like to comment that the Johnson valley open ohv area should not be absorbed by the twentynine palms marine base. The military should

learn to work together as a team by having the marines train at fort irwin army base, edwards afb, china lake naval air station and in the nellis range in Nevada. Most of the California desert has been made off limits to motorized recreation due to wilderness designations, wilderness study zones, national parks, national monuments, tortoise preserves, solar farms and military installations. Destroying Johnson valley open area with another military installation will destroy the environment and the local economies that rely on the ohv area for tourism revenues. It will also severely impact the remaining ohv areas through overcrowding and overuse.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2066

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support our troops and appreciate what the troops are doing for us. On the other hand there has to be a way that we can all come together so that the ohv community does not continue to loose our wheeling land. Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2067

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2068

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2069

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We like to ride our atv's in the desert and the good riding places keep disappearing. I'm hoping you won't take this one away. It's something we enjoy doing as a family.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson

Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2070

**Last Name** Carlisle

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I HAVE BEEN UTILIZING THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA FOR ME AND MY FAMILY OVER THE PAST 20 YEARS. I LOVE IT OUT THERE. AFTER REVIEWING THE ALTERNATIVES, I SEE PROS FOR ALTERNATIVE #3 AND CONS FOR ALTERNATIVE #6. THE EAST HAS APPROX. 3 TIMES THE AREA TO EXPAND OVER THE WESTERLY VERSION. THERE ARE PEOPLE AND HOMESITES TO THE WEST AND IT IS BARON LAND TO THE EAST. IT SEEMS OBVIOUS TO ME, OR AM I MISSING SOMETHING HERE? I SAY NO TO ALTERNATIVE 6. MY CONGRESSMAN WILL ALSO AGREE OR WILL NOT BE RE-ELECTED NEXT TERM. BOB

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2071

**Last Name** Carlisle

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** NO ON ALTERNATIVE #6 PLEASE. EXPAND TO THE EAST WHERE IT IS 3 TIMES THE AREA OVER THE WEST AND IT IS BARON AND VERY FEW HOMESITES EXIST. MANY MORE PRIVATE HOMESITES EXIST TO THE WEST. COMMON SENSE HERE, PLEASE.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2072

**Last Name** Barbarino

**First Name** Vincent

**Comment** see uploaded doc

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2072 (Page 1 of 3)**

Vincent Barbarino  
7853 La Carta Circle  
Buena Park CA  
90620

May 25, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Email: marines.mil/unit/29palms/las

Re: Comments on 29Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment DEIS

Dear Project Manager:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 29Palms land withdrawal DEIS. These comments are being submitted by me as an individual. However I am a member of several OHV organizations, a frequent visitor to Johnson Valley OHV area and have been for over 30 years. My family and I enjoy camping, rock crawling, motorcycle riding and spectating racing events in Johnson Valley. Most of our activities take place in the eastern portion that will be greatly affected by all the proposed alternatives except alternative #3 and the no action alternative.

The DEIS as submitted is flawed, contains inaccuracies and is incomplete. The DEIS:

- Is misleading when it states that a portion of the west study area will be open 10 months a year.
- Underestimates the cumulative impacts of Alternative 6.
- The marines failed to justify the need for simultaneous training of 3 MEBs.
- Inadequately evaluates the cost of an expansion of this magnitude.

**Issue One-** The marines are misleading the OHV community when they state that the RPAA land in Alternative 6 will be open for 10 months a year. In the DEIS there is no quantitative analysis on how much recreation will actually be able to be had in the RPAA. For example the DEIS states that the busiest months are March, April and May and the least are July and August. This data needs to be quantitative with its respect to

**Response to Comment 2072 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID: 2072 (Page 2 of 3)**

actual visitor days that recreation and events will be affected. One can assume that the Marines will not want to use the hottest months of the year for their training. The Marines must state exactly when they plan on training in the RPAA and then formulate quantitatively how they will restrict visitor days in the area.

**Issue Two-**The DEIS has incomplete data on the economic effects of any of the alternatives that expand into Johnson Valley. The DEIS says OHV sales will not be affected. This is misleading. The DEIS does not take into account the multi million dollar aftermarket parts industry. A large part of the OHV aftermarket parts industry relies on the part of Johnson Valley that will be affected by the proposed expansion. These cumulative effects have not been adequately studied or have any mitigation measures been proposed for these effects. The DEIS must address these.

OHV use is increasing yearly and available land drastically diminishing. A closure of this magnitude will adversely affect OHV recreation not only now but in the future. The DEIS does not adequately evaluate the cumulative effects to OHV use that the removal of over 146,000 acres of currently open land will cause. The absent and inadequate mitigation that the Marines propose can not effectively minimize those effects. The Marines have not evaluated how they will mitigate the overcrowding that will occur at nearby OHV areas. Simply stating that these issues are "unmitigatable" is not sufficient or true. With 90% of the displaced users going to other nearby areas there must be adequate mitigation measures.

Part of the stated purpose of NEPA is to "stimulate the health and welfare of man". With that being said, recreation is an important part of overall human health and welfare. The DEIS states that SB 2921 and CDPA 2010 would minimize and potentially offset recreation cumulative effects. These are not guaranteed legislation bills and at this time are not enforceable. They should not have even been presented as a type of mitigation since there is no guarantee that they will pass. Without substantial recreation mitigation, (an increase of OHV and dispersed camping area with similar size and topography and within a reasonable distance from Johnson Valley) this NEPA process will not meet its "stimulate the health and welfare of man" purpose.

**Issue Three** - The DEIS claims that the Marines need to train 3 MEB units simultaneously and need to expand to do so. However this is contradicted by the 14 March 2011 "Report of the 2010 Marine Corps Force Structure Review Group" document that states "The dual demands of sustained forward presence and sufficient lift for the assault echelons of **TWO** Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) result..." This contradiction is evidence that the Marines have failed to Justify Need for Simultaneous Training of 3 MEBs. According to the above report the Marines plan to reduce infantry battalions, artillery battalions and flying squadrons ( a 13% reduction in ground combat forces). All of which demonstrate that the Marines may not even need an expansion at all. Their own report states the need for only 2 MEBs at a time.

**Response to Comment 2072 (Page 2 of 3):**

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

Comment ID: 2072 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment 2072 (Page 3 of 3):

**Issue Four** - The Marines expect to see a "mini Quadrennial Defense Review" (QDR) in the upcoming months. This upcoming review is seen as far more consequential than an actual QDR because it may conclude that the nation cannot afford to have the military keep doing everything that it does today. This illustrates that the Marines may simply want to expand in order to justify their current funding or even perhaps to justify asking congress for an increase in funding. None of this is addressed in the DEIS.

At this time our country is facing the biggest deficit ever. The Marines should find a way to meet their training goals without adding to the trillion dollar deficit. Cost numbers stated in the DEIS are vague at best. The Marines must try to be fiscally responsible in these tough economic times. The Marines must rethink the need to expand the 29Palms base and/or reconsider working with the Army at Fort Irwin or use one of their other bases on the Mid-Atlantic coast or the Gulf of Mexico coast that will not require expensive land and airspace expansion.

In summary, I want to again state my strong opposition to any Marine expansion into Johnson Valley and to the entire project as it is presented in the DEIS. I would like to encourage the Marines to reevaluate the need and fiscal impact of any such expansion. I also encourage the Marines to realistically consider working with the Army at Fort Irwin for their training needs. Captain Nick Mannweiler's remarks at the DAC meeting demonstrate the Marines' unwillingness to do so. This needs to change.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment and look forward to working with the Marines in the future so they can train effectively while still preserving recreation in Johnson Valley.

Sincerely,

Vincent Barbárino  
7853 La Carta Circle  
Buena Park, CA 90620  
Cell# 714.739.5692  
Email: [vbarbarino@roadrunner.com](mailto:vbarbarino@roadrunner.com)

**Comment ID** 2073

**Last Name** Long

**First Name** Patrick

**Comment** I have been camping and riding in the Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle Area for over 36 years. The quality family time that can be shared is unique and coveted by those who have had the opportunity to experience it. Although some families enjoy city parks and organized recreation it is nice to be allowed to experience freedom and open wide spaces with unlimited chances to explore. This is all made possible due to the proximity and accessibility to local civilization. The military has the ability to utilize the vast desert space available yet wants the convenience of locality at the expense of the families that only ask for a small acreage nearest to their homes. I ask them to reconsider the need to have their training facility so close to thier base, yet between them and civilization when they have almost endless space to train in the other direction. Please consider letting the public enjoy the relatively small acreage nearby rather than make them travel through the military training ground to find recreation elsewhere.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2074

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While both my wife and I served this nation and fully support the Armed Forces of this great country of ours, if this travesty is allowed to proceed, I can gaurantee that none of my children will ever join the Armed Forces. My children have come to understand that we have to fight many environmental organizations for our right to enjoy our OHV's. But they asked me why we now have to fight the U.S. Armed Forces as well. I cannot give them an answer as to why the military forces of this country are so ready and willing to destroy an area enjoyed by so many. If this plan is allowed to proceed, I have no doubt that it will severly affect the ability of our military to meet recruitment objectives. PLease find another option for the base expansion and leave what little OHV areas our children have left.

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2075

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** LeRoy

**Comment** Since the original email site was incorrect, I respectfully request a 60 day extension on the Johnson Valley EIS project. LeRoy Miller

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings

before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2076

**Last Name** preston

**First Name** william

**Comment** Please preserve these riding areas for us American families, these riding areas create lifelong family memories. The are what America stands for and are part of the american fabric live, freedom and most important family togetherness and family memories. Trading (losing) this land to unnessary military values, is not nessesary. We do not want a police state! Want freedom!

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2077

**Last Name** preston

**First Name** william

**Comment** Save this land for families who ride. We do not need more four freedoms taken away, we do not want a price state

**Date Comment Received** 5/23/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2078

**Last Name** Row

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** What are you guys doing?As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the"no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large- Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible

access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. The US has plenty of govt owned and BLM land other than Johnson Valley that could be used for your purposes.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2079

**Last Name** bell

**First Name** james

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from

adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

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**Comment ID** 2080

**Last Name** Kouns

**First Name** Scott

**Comment** I think removing motorcycle lands will be devastating to an already shrinking off road available land. More and more lands are being devoured and motorcycle enthusiasts are the ones who suffer. Generations of folks who like to enjoy the wilderness are not going to be able due to these acquisitions. Please help and either provide more available property or disallow the army's request. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2081

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2082

**Last Name** Palenske

**First Name** Grant

**Comment** Johnson Valley has been a special place for my family over the years...I started off-road riding at the age of 6(1966) in Johnson Valley. Please do not allow the military to take our public land the we use to recreate. This is the largest area in CA to offer multiple use of recreation and not a good idea to turn it over to the military to destroy.. Thanks Grant

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates geological impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.12 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there would be less

than significant impacts to soils from military vehicle operations, ordnance delivery, and infantry training.

**Comment ID** 2083

**Last Name** Kennard

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** I am opposed to the military taking over Johnson Valley for training purposes. We frequent the area every year and with more open desert areas being turned into "wilderness" it would be a great loss to the off roading community. Best Regards Mike Kennard

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. TThe Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2084

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please consider that the people paying your salaries are the ones who want to go out to the desert and enjoy it close to home. Do you mean to tell us that all of the land in Nevada, Arizona, New Mexico & Texas is unsuitable for for marine corp. use and this is the only viable place. Why do you find it compelling to build this base so close to highly a populated area?

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2085

**Last Name** Grapengater

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while

also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2086

**Last Name** Brandon

**First Name** Barron

**Comment** I am one citizen of this once great nation that is opposed to the continued taking of lands by the government. This taking has reached epidemic proportions and needs to stop now. I have watched this growing trend toward restricting access to our lands citing every reason under the sun and it scares me. At this rate the American public will very soon be limited in their free travels, they ( the government controllers) will allow the free American people to travel to work and back home with complete freedom, but anything other than that will be strictly controlled, taxed and limited to a bare minimum. I am one free American who is ready to see a movement to take our country back from these communists. We all need to stand up for freedom and say NO to all of the takings and stifling regulations that are destroying the American Dream of freedom !

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2087

**Last Name** Burton

**First Name** Westlee

**Comment** Ok first off I been a dirt bike rider since age three and my sis taught me how to ride and if anything happen to the area of el mirage I don't know

where to go because when I want to ride and stay the weekend there it's el mirage it's close and very affordable place to have fun .. Please whatever u do don't take more land out of the el mirage

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. El Mirage OHV Area is not within the proposed acquisition study areas for this EIS. Please refer to Chapter 2 of the EIS for a description and maps of the proposed action and alternatives.

**Comment ID** 2088

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am against loosing Johnson Valley for public recreation. We have been going there for years with our family it would be a tragic loss to everyone. My Vote would to say no to the Marines. Dave

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2089

**Last Name** walters

**First Name** carl

**Comment** This expansion to the west is absolutly wrong. It is incredible to think that the marine corp. would consider jeopardising a multi million dollar industry so some federal entity can sew on another star.The federal government is already on probation with the american people. Yeah,do you guys remember them.You better rethink this nonsense.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2090

**Last Name** Schrader

**First Name** Leon

**Comment** I fully back the Military and am very Proud of our country, I am an avid off road enthusiast and feel it would be a shame to close even more riding areas, would it not be possible to find another area where some echo-whaco is trying to protect a lizzard or a tree? We need our recreation as much as our Military needs to train, take control of our own country and find another place PLEASE... Thanks for your consideration and GOD BLESS THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2091

**Last Name** Contreras

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** Please go east. The future of our sport depends on this land for a large portion of west coast off roaders and outdoorsmen. I want to explore the deserts. I want to share this area with my children for generations to come. Thank you for the consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2092

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We don't have many places like johnson valley to enjoy I would like to know what congress people are behind this so we can vote them out of office we really enjoy this off highway park we have many great memory's with our children out there and more to make I'm totally against this!!!!!! ONE MAD OFFROADER .

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2093

**Last Name** Molinari

**First Name** Dave

**Comment**

I am writing for two purposes: (1)to register my objection to the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project, and(2)to notify you that the DEIS for the project is defective with respect to its analysis of project-related impacts on the local economy, and(3)surrounding property impacts for which no meaningful mitigation has been offered. From my perspective, the only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Only the "No Action" alternative would allow continued public recreation in Johnson Valley at its current levels and also avoid economic impacts and disruptions to the surrounding communities. My family owns property and a cabin in Johnson Valley (since 1970) for the purpose of recreating in the Johnson Valley OHV area up to 12 times a year. Our favorite places to visit in Johnson Valley are Means Dry Lake, Soggy Dry Lake, Sand Dunes, and surrounding areas for miles where we engage in motorcycle riding, racing, and Jeep exploration. When preparing for a trip, we spend \$100 on fuel, groceries, and other supplies in our local area. Then, we spend an additional \$200 in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville area while we are recreating. Over the years, we have patronized the following businesses Cafe 247, Coyote Loco, Ace Hardware, Gas Stations, Burger Depot, Home Depot, In-N-Out, among many others, in the Johnson Valley/Lucerne Valley/Victorville Area. If Johnson Valley, or any part of it, were to be closed due to the expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center, there would be no reason for my family to travel to this part of the desert. Our property would go into disrepair or have to be sold at a lower market value. Therefore, we would no longer spend money in Johnson Valley, Lucerne Valley, Victorville, or the other small communities that currently serve the recreating public near the proposed project site. Our property is located on the south side of HWY 247 in the BLM "Limited Use" designation which limits travel to existing routes. The area will see much more off road vehicle use (in unapproved areas) as recreationists are pushed off the "JV Open Area" from Base Expansion. These impacts and proposed mitigation are not addressed in the DEIS adequately at all. As written, the DEIS provides an inadequate and incomplete analysis of the project's potential impacts on the local economy. The analysis is based on unproven assumptions that contradict both common sense and my own experiences as a frequent and long-standing visitor to Johnson Valley. To suggest that the proposed Project, including the "Preferred Alternative," would result in anything other than the significant disruptions of the local economy is misleading and speculative in nature. This part of the DEIS, among others, must be completely revised and until such action is taken I can only support the "No Action" alternative. Thank you for taking the time to consider my comments on this important matter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and was used in conjunction with assumptions provided by BLM about future recreational visitor patterns and using average expenditure data adjusted for inflation as the basis for the analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2094

**Last Name** Lyon

**First Name** Keith

**Comment** As much as I would like to stand up and scream about what the military is trying to do, I'll try not to. There has to be another place on this earth that you can TAKE OVER other than one of the largest and last places for off roading in So Cal. Granted southern California's economy is doing so well and there's such a vast amount of space for those of us that enjoy this type of sport we can just move on to another area, NOT. I think the military would use the term Soft Target in the acquiring of this public land. An easy target, the masses have no concept of what goes on there and there ignorance is your hole card. GO East, we won't care and neither will the masses!

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not

satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process..

<b>Comment ID</b>	2095
<b>Last Name</b>	Siewert
<b>First Name</b>	Bryan
<b>Comment</b>	Many Motorsports Companies use Johnson Valley extensively to test our products for off-road production. There are so few desert areas in So Cal and Johnson Valley is ideal for testing and family recreation which my children have grown up in as well. Please allow us to continue using this area as we have for so many years. Thank you for your time and consideration.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/24/2011
<b>Response</b>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p> <p>The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.</p>

**Comment ID** 2096

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** our family and friends love to vacation in the desert. We come down for a full week and four days on our other vacation often bringing our kids friends too. We love riding our motorcycles through all this open land and exploring at each of our stops. Our trips are often 6 to 7 hours away from camp and our motorhomes. We always keep the desert clean pick up after ourselves and many times pick up other trash. My son says when he grows up and has a family he will bring them down there too. Please don't fence us in. So much land has been gobbled up or closed to save a certain weed or animal. While we still try to keep camping at our regular areas the rules and the loss of land is crushing our family trips. We are losing so much and yearn for wide open spaces. So please use what you have and leave our desert alone. Don't take any more we already are sharing.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2097

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I have been following the progress of the Marine expansion into Johnson Valley for some time and feel I need to comment. Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support the "No Action" alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. My family and I have been visiting the dessert (not just Johnson Valley but many parts of the Mojave and Death Valley regions) for many years. My means of travel is by Jeep. A day trip from camp would involve traveling 50 or more miles one way, spending the day exploring the backcountry and returning to camp that night. We usually

hike a few miles at the end of a trail to see what is out there. Here is my concern: Many of the trails that I have driven have been closed. Areas have been nearly cut off to exploration and camping. Much of the dessert is difficult to travel: little or no water, extreme climates, and vast tracts of rugged land. Travel by vehicle is a near necessity. We have lost so much area that I can not stand to loose another. I consider myself to be a Steward of the land, I leave where I go cleaner than when I found it, I help my fellow travelers when in need, I pass on the idea of travel lightly and respect the land so that others may enjoy it as well.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2098

**Last Name** Vaughn

**First Name** Carol

**Comment** I wish to object to the takeover of land in the Johnson Valley and adjacent OHV area. This area is of vital importance to the economy of our area and also provides one of the only places to legally ride off-road. Many utilize this area for family recreation. This area provides families with wholesome entertainment in our great outdoors. These families also spend a significant amount of money at our local grocery stores, gas stations and sporting goods stores. In addition, without such designated areas many local homeowners will have their property overrun by illegal off-roaders. I request the decision to take this property be rescinded and another solution be considered.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 2099

**Last Name** Carlson

**First Name** Jon

**Comment** For the last 20+ years I have been going to Giant Rock area and Johnson Valley riding ATVs and having Family outings in the area. It is one of the few places remaining that it is legal to ride and the thought of losing this area distresses me deeply. I am also concerned that if this area is taken from public use that there will be a significant increase of people riding in other areas that are not legal to ride on such as the nature conservancy and private property. Jon Carlson

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 2100

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** With a knowledge of MAGTF capabilities in recent and future acquisitions and as an offroad enthusiast, it is my strong belief that rather than removing additional OHV land from the public, which is far more rare than Military special use land and airspace, the USN and USMC need to do a better job with joint use of existing special use areas.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2101

**Last Name** Post

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** I understand the need for training. It just seems excessive to take so much land in order to have "full scale" training grounds. The loss of great family recreation area (of which there is so little left) and the loss of revenue to the local businesses will hit hard putting many out of work. I feel this land needs to remain open to the public for its many current uses. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

2102

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

PLEASE DO NOT CLOSE OR ALTER THE JOHNSON VALLEY OHV AREA. YOU WOULD BE DOING A HUGE DISSERVICE TO THE AREA AND SURROUNDINGS COMMUNITIES. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2103

**Last Name** glowniak

**First Name** jeff

**Comment** do not take away our riding areas. they are for the public use. i pay my taxes for these areas. do not steal from me!

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2104

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2105

**Last Name** Tedrow

**First Name** John

**Comment** Please do not let this happen, My family and I have been going to this area since the late 80's not only to race but for family fun and recreation. This has been a big part of our lives not only for us but for countless other's that use that area. Since moving to utah in the early 90's we have watched our lands disapear, this simply can't happen, Please think of our youth or future generations. Thank you, John W. Tedrow

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2106

**Last Name** Andersen

**First Name** Alissa

**Comment** Please see attached file. Thank you!! Please keep our desert open for public use!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2106**

To whom it may concern-

I believe I am not alone in saying I will do whatever it takes to fight for the preservation of OUR desert. There are many reasons why these privileges should not be revoked from us. Please give me, as well as the many other off-road enthusiasts in this region, the opportunity to speak our peace and prove that keeping this land for public use is for a higher cause.

There are a select few individuals out there who give off-roaders as a community a bad name. This is unfortunate, but I believe that every group, sect and community has these types of people. I personally know many highly educated, upstanding members of society who are avid off-roaders. We pay our taxes, we vote and participate in our communities. We know the importance of respecting this land to keep it open. Clean-Dezert is a low budget outfit, yet it was able to accomplish so much. I firmly believe that the community as a whole should not be punished or held liable for the actions of only a select few.

Another huge point to take into consideration is the vast economic damage that would come from the demise of the off-road industry. Off-roading, whether it be racing or leisure, is an expensive hobby. There are many men and women who feed their families and put roofs over their heads from the fruits of the off-road industry. With the current economic standing of not only this area but the entire country, we cannot afford to lose any more jobs.

The opportunity; privilege even, to have the desert at my disposal has given me many great memories. The desert will always be a part of me. Whether it be the many lessons I have learned from it, or the life-long friends I have gained from it; the good things the desert has provided me completely outweigh any of the bad. Desert racing teaches teamwork and responsibility, your crew is your family. The desert has had such a monumental influence on who I am today, and I am sure I am not the first nor will I be the last person to say that. These are things that I want my son to be a part of as he grows up. It would be truly devastating to have these opportunities snatched away.

Please take my points into consideration, any help, even the smallest bit - will be greatly appreciated. Insignificant as we may be individually, we can make a difference as a whole. I promise we will not stand idle while our land is taken away. Thank you kindly for reading.

Sincerely,

Alissa Andersen

alissaoffroad@gmail.com

**Response to Comment 2106:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2107

**Last Name** PELLANDA

**First Name** CINDY

**Comment** This is in regards to 29Palms Training Land Acquisition. Our family have been using this land for 3 generations for recreational and educational. We have very few off road areas left for recreational and camping use. DO NOT TAKE THIS LAND AWAY FROM US! We also spend a fair amount of money for equipment we use for this purpose alone that does benefit Southern California bussiness struggling in the economy. Please consider this request. regards tax payer Cindy Pellanda

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2108

**Last Name** Schwarz

**First Name** Kurt

**Comment** Please see the attached letter for our public comments. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2108 (Page 1 of 2)

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.



9045 Dunloggin Court  
Ellicott City, MD 21042  
[krschwal@verizon.net](mailto:krschwal@verizon.net)  
410-461-1643

May 24, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Submitted via comment portal: [https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms\\_DEIS](https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms_DEIS)

To the Department of the Navy:

The Maryland Ornithological Society (MOS) appreciates the opportunity to submit these comments about the draft environmental impact statement for the U.S. Marine Corps' (USMC) proposal to expand the Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California, by annexing up to 366,000 acres of Bureau of Land Management public lands. Our concern is with the impacts on wildlife populations and wildlife habitat. We take no position for or against the expansion, but we have several concerns.

MOS is a statewide nonprofit organization established in 1945 and devoted to the study and conservation of birds. Currently we have 15 chapters and approximately 1,500 members. Some are scientists and naturalists, but our membership includes people of all ages and all walks of life, from physicists to firefighters, legislators to landscapers. Birding is one of the fastest-growing outdoor recreational activities. MOS members travel to federal lands on birding and nature-watching vacations throughout the United States. We spend money on food, lodging, guide services, books, and souvenirs to support the local economy wherever we go.

We compliment the Department of the Navy on the draft environmental impact statement. We believe the six action alternatives analyzed in the EIS represent a reasonable range of alternatives.

The authors of the EIS were wise to consider wildlife values when they adopted screening criteria for the alternatives. Criterion No. 5 is: "Avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, cities/towns, and interstate highways." (DEIS page 2-12) This criterion reflects congressional mandates under the Wilderness Act and the Endangered Species Act.

We emphatically oppose the suggestion by some off-road vehicle (ORV) riders to repeal wilderness protection for some 150,000 acres of the Sheephole Valley, Cleghorn Lakes and Cadiz Dunes Wilderness Areas. All three have important wildlife values including Roadrunner, desert bighorn sheep, desert tortoise, kangaroo rat, and other species of desert wildlife. The alternatives in the EIS respect the boundaries of the wilderness areas. All were designated by Congress in the California Desert Protection Act of 1994 after 18 years of consideration through the BLM wilderness program. Repealing that protection is not a reasonable alternative.

The EIS has responded to the concerns of ORV riders by recommending a preferred alternative, Alternative 6, that provides for shared use of Johnson Valley by the USMC and the public. Military training activities would be scheduled to harmonize them with visitor uses, including ORV activities as well as wildlife-watching and other outdoor recreation activities.

The EIS does not adequately deal with illegal ORV activities within the project area. We ask the USMC to seek the recommendations of California birding and wildlife groups for mitigation measures to protect wildlife habitat and wildlife populations from the impacts of illegal ORV activities. It would be a mistake

NEPA-1

NEPA-2

REC-1

REC-2

Response to Comment 2108 (Page 1 of 2):

NEPA-1:

Thank you for your comment.

NEPA-2:

Comment noted.

REC-1:

Comment noted.

REC-2:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a supplemental Recreation Study to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

**Comment ID: 2108 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment 2108 (Page 2 of 2):**

to assume that only legal ORV use will occur in the area. Past experience on BLM public lands and in national forests has shown that illegal ORV traffic can impose severe impacts on wildlife habitat. All federal agencies need to reckon with such illegal activity when making land use decisions. ] REC-2

Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Kurt R. Schwarz  
MOS Conservation Chair

**Comment ID** 2109

**Last Name** MANGOLD

**First Name** TIM

**Comment** PLEASE DON'T CLOSE ANY AREA OS EL MIRAGE. IT IS THE LAST LEGAL RIDING PLACE WITH BATHROOMS AND RANGERS THAT I FEEL SAFE. I HOPE YOU ALLOW ME THE FREEDOM TO RIDE MY DIRT BIKE AND EXPLORE THE GREAT OUTDOORS.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2110

**Last Name** O'Dor

**First Name** Brian

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only the No-Action Alternative. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. Please note that while in full support of our Marines and their need for training, the Marines already have 596,000 acres for training at 29 Palms, the largest military training area in the nation and the largest US base in the world. Their need to expand even more is in serious question.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2111

**Last Name** Roach

**First Name** Alan

**Comment** I strongly support only the No-Action Alternative. Given the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Marines already have 596,000 acres for training at 29 Palms, the largest military training area in the nation and the largest US base in the world. Their need to expand even more is in serious question.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2112

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I believe the US Marine Corps should take whatever land they need to improve the capability to train troops. The better prepared the troops are, the more lives will be saved. Recreational and economic impact will be minimal to those who currently use this land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2113

**Last Name** foley

**First Name** scott

**Comment** seeing how gongress is cutting defense spending this is the perfect project to scrap.We are left with very few areas to recreate any more.Its time to stop taking our lands away from us.No action is the correct choice for this land use.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2114

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I'm a HUGE fan of our military and especially of the brave men and women that make it the finest in the world. I would stand shoulder to shoulder with any of them if need be. However, please don't attempt to take more land away from those who choose to recreate off-road / off-highway as these areas are already too limited, and too few. I know for a fact that many military folks also enjoy using off-road products. At a time when it has become increasingly difficult to find adequate places to recreate, this is bad for all involved.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

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**Comment ID** 2115

**Last Name** Rowland

**First Name** Barbara

**Comment** The Government/Marines have enough empty bases that I don't believe that they need to take over more land at 29 Palms/Johnson Valley. This has political motives written all over it..Diane Feinstein wanting more land to trade for more Wildernesses "This is OUR PUBLIC LANDS" I keep seeing articles about Diane Feinstein trading land so her husband Richard C Blum can profit from it (Solar Business) along with that Mr. Blum is the board for the Wilderness Society. I could go on & on, but I think you get the jest of what I'm talking about, something smells real fishy about this whole acquisition.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2116

**Last Name** Vaughn

**First Name** Buck

**Comment** Where are the people to go to off road. The government has Sucked up enough of the peoples land.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

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**Comment ID** 2117

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please, please, please stop taking away our land. Every year more and more land gets removed from recreation activities, using our own funds to support these types of proceedings. More and more people enjoy motorized recreation activities on public land, and every year we keep getting squeezed into smaller and smaller quarters. Ask yourself how many rats can you squeeze into one cage before trouble breaks out, and you will get the same answer on public lands. So again, I beg you not to take another chunk of public land. Sincerely, Bill

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential

overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2118

**Last Name** Vaughn

**First Name** Buck

**Comment** SUCK UP MORE LAND. WHERE ARE THE OFF ROADERS GO. WHAT ABOUT THE MERCHANTS WHO WELL LOSE INCOME

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2119

**Last Name** Watson

**First Name** Stephen

**Comment** I am an outdoor motorsports enthusiast and have built a business catering to other outdoor motorsports enthusiasts. It is very important to me and my customer base that the Johnson Valley area remain open as it is now. There is no other place like it, literally in the world. There is no more ground being set aside for motorsports or even just vehicular exploration so keeping this open is very important for us. In the fourwheeling world, Johnson Valley is a mecca, a bucket list destination that ranks in importance with other places like the Rubicon and the Moab area. Even in this list Johnson Valley is unique in it's size and layout. When places like this are closed to public use, my business declines because there are fewer places

for people to use our equipment and less motivation to pursue the hobby I have built a business and lifestyle around. We have 11 employees here and numerous vendors that depend on this industry and depend on people using and even dreaming of using recreation areas. JV is the greatest of all. Even being from Colorado, we make a couple of trips each year ourselves. Closing this area is going to affect a lot more people than will actually use it. We have east coast customers that dream of a trip to "the hammers" and will scrape, save, build and test a vehicle to prepare for what may be a once in a lifetime experience. Our sport and even our lifestyle are built on these dreams. With all due respect (and they are due a lot of respect), please send the Marines east. Thank you Stephen Watson President Offroad Design Inc.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2120

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine

Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2121

**Last Name** Henderson

**First Name** Michael

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment** I urge you to go to the east where it will have little effect on the many races and offroad riding that has been know for show many years.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2122

**Last Name** Brodersen

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2123

**Last Name** Calderon

**First Name** Roy

**Comment** We off roaders are losing more and more land all the time. Hey Military, how much more land is needed. Give the people who visit the area and live in the area a break. What is next? Take over Apple Valley for more training land. I support our Military but now this is going way too far when more land is being grabbed up for training. What happened to the land now being used for training purpose? Is it all destroyed from usage and now needs to be replaced? come on. Back off

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 2124

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** May 24, 2011 Via E-Mail and U.S. Mail Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92132-5190 Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for Proposed Expansion of Twenty-Nine Palms USMC Base Re:

**Date Comment Received**

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be

legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2125

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** No place in the DEIS is it mentioned where to mail comments. This is a basic violation of NEPA, therefore there must be an extension of the comment period granted

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2126

**Last Name** Nay

**First Name** Donn

**Comment** There is currently a severe water shortage on the 29 Palms Marine Base. Any expansion of the Base will put an additional burden on a slowly replenish-able water supply. The DEIS fails to explain where the water will

come from to support the base expansion and what affect this expansion will have on the Means aquifer.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2127

**Last Name** Burton

**First Name** Ashley

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2128

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** 29 Palms Marine Corps should as a good show of faith to the american people, include within the scope of this evolution pursue a request through the pentagon to congress. Requesting mitigation (acre for acre) of lands removed from public OHV acces by the 29 Palms expansion. Request congress to redesignate the restricted govt. land West of what will be left of the Johnson Valley open area to connect the Stoddard wells OHV area and what is left of the Johnson Valley OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2129

**Last Name** Fuller

**First Name** Victoria

**Comment**

Community ORV Watch [www.orvwatch.com](http://www.orvwatch.com) PO Box 1722 29 Palms, California 92277 Dear Sir/Madam: The purpose of this letter is to offer our comments on the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Draft EIS. We are a non-profit community-based organization dedicated to defending our private and public lands from off-road vehicle (ORV) abuse. Our members reside in the Morongo Basin including Johnson Valley and Wonder Valley. We suffer from widespread and consistent ORV trespass on our private property, public lands off-limits to ORVs, designated wilderness areas, roads, berms, and flood control infrastructure. ORVs are a source of extreme dust, noise and nuisance and are a major problem for law enforcement and code enforcement. We oppose any decision that will place our communities in harm's way regarding illegal ORV activity. We are EXTREMELY CONCERNED that the base expansion into the Johnson Valley ORV recreational area will lead to an increase in illegal ORV incursions into our neighborhoods. The loss of a significant portion of the Johnson Valley OHV area will result in adverse impacts including: increased trespass and damage to private and public lands increased destruction of vegetation and wildlife habitat increased harassment, intimidation, and retaliation against private property owners who report illegal activity increased conflicts between riders and residents increased damage to roads, berms and other flood control infrastructure, and the increased costs of repair of these features for local taxpayers ?????? increased demand for emergency, law enforcement, code enforcement, and other public services and increased costs associated with these services increased dust, noise, and nuisance in our rural communities from displaced ORV activities Contrary to statements in the draft EIS that displaced ORV riders will use nearby designated open areas, many riders (as they have threatened at public meetings, in their scoping comments, and on their web sites) who are displaced from Johnson Valley will invade surrounding rural communities. Since local law enforcement and the BLM are currently incapable of sufficiently dealing with existing illegal ORV activity, we anticipate a dramatic increase in property destruction and conflicts with local residents. In addition, with ineffective fines and the lack of visible identification of ORVs, illegal activity continues with impunity. Despite receiving numerous comments from residents from Wonder Valley, Landers, and other surrounding communities, the draft EIS does not sufficiently address the anticipated impacts of illegal ORV activity for these areas. Executive Order 11644 mandates that the federal government control ORV activity in order to protect r

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including

potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a supplemental Recreation Study to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2130

**Last Name** bernocco

**First Name** eric

**Comment** I am an off road enthusiast and I enjoy the area in question very much. I know that a happy resolution to this mess is unlikely but I would hope that consideration would be rendered to the thousands of people who use this area. It is true that more and more lands are being restricted from OHV use in the name of whatever is the flavor of the day. We have problems finding ways to keep young people off the streets and out of gangs and off roading has been a very positive way to do that. I hope there is a better opportunity for the military than these 160,000 Acres

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process.

Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2131

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am 19 years old, the past 10 years I have spent land sailing at Soggy Dry Lake, and Jeeping and motorcycling over practically every trail in the Johnson Valley area many times a year. In doing so my family has spent thousands of dollars a year both in the local communities, as well as part stores all across the western US. I have read an extensive part of your EIS, and feel it vastly underestimates the amount of recreation that occurs in Johnson Valley. The environmental issues are also understated; the government thinks Jeep tires destroy the land, but a tank is far worse. When my family recreates and sees wildlife, we often stop and view it from a distance, but I have a hard time believing a flying bomb, or a soldier in a tank will not kill everything from flowers to tortoises. The Marines are seeking far more land than they need. Please only take the land above Emmerson Dry Lake to the Rock Pile up to the Power Lines, as seen in my attached map. If you still need additional land go East, and South, or even North. But keep the Hammers to the Rock Pile open year round as part of the Johnson Valley OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/24/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2132

**Last Name** Arnoult

**First Name** Francis

**Comment** Noooo! To the DEIS. It's a no win for off roaders for sure. As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action"

alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2133

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** No. No. And NO! California has already lost too many acres of open land open to off-roading. Johnson Valley is one of the last places with open use where off- roaders aren't restricted to posted, generic trails that pose no challenge at all.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2134

**Last Name** Confidential

**First Name** Confidential

**Comment** I believe that the expansion of restricted airspace over MCAGCC 29 Palms CA, would greatly impact General Aviation around the area and subsequently many other air carriers. As things are now, I know that training can be done sufficiently with the current amount of Airspace the R2501 provides, along with the Bristol and Sundance MOA's. If the expansion were to occur, I do not see how it would be effective just by making the expanded area a MOA, it would have to be a restricted airspace to carry out such operations that are planned. I think this would greatly impact air travel in the local area around Palm Springs and aircraft flying north through what is currently the CAX corridor. The R2501 is already in a high volume area for "civilian" aviation with very little military aviation actually taking place as compared to some other restricted airspace areas. My interest are keeping airspace open to GA and not see it along with the land be taken away when sufficient airspace and land already exist.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 2135

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** At this time I am not submitting a comment, this effort is only intended to put myself on your mailing list in order to receive updates about this process. Thank You,

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2136

**Last Name** Christopher

**First Name** Lawrence

**Comment** If the Marine Corp. Base expands West: -the airstrip I am a partial owner of: 7CA1 (Abraham's) will become unuseable. -the value of our property will be greatly diminished. -the loss of Off Road Vehicle acreage will be immense and uncalled for. - the economy of the entire Johnson Valley, Landers and Lucerne Valley area will suffer greatly. Possible Solutions: 1. Change nothing, NO expansion. 2. Move restricted airspace 3 miles to the NE from 7CA1 airstrip. 3. Place a "key-hole" large enough for access to 7CA1 airstrip.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**Comment ID** 2137

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** With regard to Option 6A, the EIS addresses some of the issues regarding the 30 day closures, but it does not go into much detail. For instance, what sort of access controls will be used for both the restricted area, and for the

limited use area during the closures? It seems like fencing/gates could be too restrictive during other times of the year. The current signage around the base perimeter is vastly inadequate (it reeks of entrapment, by misleading the public and then citing them when they venture onto the base without realizing it). I would hope that a real investment would be made to provide better signage and notification along the perimeter. Also, how long in advance will the 30 day closures be scheduled? We own property that is adjacent to this limited use area, and would like to be able to plan our visits more than just a month or two in advance. It seems that it would not be hard to have these scheduled and posted up to a year in advance.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

**Comment ID** 2138

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Under proposed Option 6A, the southerly portion of the current OHV area would be accessible for roughly 10 months out of the year. What sort of guarantees are the Marines willing to put forward that the 10 months will slowly be whittled away one month at a time until 10 years from now, the entire area is full restricted?

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with

the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

**Comment ID** 2139

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The information provided in the draft environmental impact statement regarding de-designation of wilderness areas to the east and south is vastly insufficient. The options that involved this measure were seemingly tossed aside without much depth of thought. Yes, there are legislative hurdles that would need to be passed in order for this expansion to be a viable option. However, there are plenty of facts available to support the relative low quality of these wilderness areas. The only reason that the OHV area is a higher preference is the relative ease of grabbing the land from the public. The truth is, there would be far less impact to far fewer real people by following this path. I implore you to either take no action, or at least give eastward/southern expansion more consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2140

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Under proposed Option 6A, the southerly portion of the current OHV area would be accessible for roughly 10 months out of the year. The draft EIS states that an estimated 70 percent of the current 337,000 visitor-days per year would still occur, despite the fact that the new accessible area would be just over 40 percent of its current size (this for only 10 months of the

year). This still leaves nearly 236,000 visitor-days annually, in a much smaller area. Due to the smaller area, access patterns will inevitably shift around the modified boundary. Many of the alternative access roads to the southerly portion that would remain open for 10 months of each year are small dirt roads that travel through homesteaded properties where people live (unlike Boone Road, which currently serves as the main entry/exit point for people visiting the OHV area). The draft EIS fails to address the impact of this shift in traffic patterns that would occur under option 6A. This would, without a doubt, damage the property values of the residents in these communities. The California state constitution guarantees that "just compensation" be provided to a property owner when their property has been "taken or damaged" by a public agency. How will these people be compensated for their loss of property value?

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. Furthermore, the Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2141

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For 50 years, my family has owned property in the area north of Landers that is adjacent to both Twentynine Palms and the Johnson Valley OHV Area. Over the years since the OHV area was designated, off-road recreation has become one of the primary draws to the area not only for our family, but for hundreds of thousands of other people. Because of the proximity to the OHV area, the value of our land has become inextricably tied to the existence of the OHV area. It would, in fact, be worth much more to someone who participates in OHV recreation than to someone who does not. The California state constitution guarantees that "just compensation" be provided to a property owner when their property has been "taken or damaged" by a public agency. While our property would not be taken under the current proposals, it will most certainly be damaged by the limited access to recreational opportunities. The draft EIS fails to address this issue. Should one of the proposals for westward expansion be

accepted, what action are the Marines prepared to take to compensate us for our loss of property value?

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. Furthermore, the Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2142

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2143

**Last Name** Sizelove

**First Name** Jeff and Karin

**Comment** To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager, The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use. This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another. We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property. We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well. Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one. Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the

Johnson Valley OHV Area. So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion. With Sincere Regards, Jeff and Karin Sizelove 714-671-0980 ksizelove@pacbell.net 912 S. Lantana Avenue Brea, California 92821

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2144

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action "...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need..." However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2145

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We are losing places to ride our ATV's in California lately & do not want to lose any more areas. The California economy needs all the help it can get & closing down OHV areas will only hinder the crisis. So please keep these places open. Steve

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2146

**Last Name** Hughes

**First Name** Brendan

**Comment** Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 29 Palms Marine Base Expansion Draft EIS. My name is Brendan Hughes and I live in Joshua Tree. I believe the plan to expand the Marine Base is unnecessary and could disrupt the social and environmental structure of this part of the Desert. All of the alternatives, with the exception of the No Action Alternative, will require a substantial amount of take and harm to the desert tortoise. The take of hundreds of tortoises is an unacceptable risk to the survival of the species. Additionally, this expansion is unnecessary for several reasons.

First, the Marines have fought several wars using the existing training capacity of the MCAGCC. Also, the conflicts in which the Marines are currently active are nothing like the Marine Expeditionary Battalion training that this expansion proposes to accommodate. The current conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan consist of guerrilla warfare between small groups of forces. Expanding the MCAGCC by 200,000 acres will not prepare Marines for this type of fighting. The "train as we fight" motto of this expansion does not apply. Moreover, the disruption to the Johnson Valley OHV Area will send hordes of off-roaders to sensitive areas of the desert. Johnson Valley needs to stay open or public and private lands will be severely affected by these displaced recreationists. The impact of the Marine base would be felt far beyond its borders. I encourage BLM and the Marines to choose the No Action Alternative. If, however, this expansion does move forward, the managing agencies should choose Alternative 5. This option would allow for shared use of Johnson Valley OHV Area, and would have less impact on biological resources like the desert tortoise. The Marines could fulfill their erroneous "train as we fight" goal and off-roaders would be kept within the existing sacrifice area of Johnson Valley most of the time. The Marines should not stress the local community and should respect our right to enjoy our public lands. Thank you for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2147

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a sailor with 18 years of active duty and 10 years on Amphibious sea duty, I understand the need for quality training. I'm also an off-road enthusiast and understand the impact of frivolous decision making on our sport. Furthermore, I've seen the rotting remains of bases we, as a military, have left behind once we BRAC'd them and walked away. To my point/comment...make the resources we already have access to work for what we need or repurpose them properly before frivolously acquiring new land to use on occasion. The same people that will lose prime sporting land

are largely supporters of the military, and as we continue to look for public support/approval, this decision should not be taken lightly. My .02...

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2148

**Last Name** Blumer

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Dear United States Marine Corps, Back in 2004 while working as a freelancer, I reported on the MDR Lucerne 400 desert race for Off-Road Magazine. I called the story "Desert Soldiers," drawing a parallel between the intrepid desert racers themselves and the men and women of the armed forces who protect our freedom in the deserts of Iraq and Afghanistan. The request of the Marine Corps to withdraw land from the Johnson Valley OHV area leaves me in a quandary. I remain grateful for national defense. At the same time, the off-road community has lost millions of acres over the years either to urban development or to aggressive moves by anti-access groups. In California, there are about 14 million acres set aside as Wilderness. Contrast this with just a few hundred thousand acres left for designated OHV areas. Johnson Valley is one of these. We don't have much land left, so the proposed expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Corps base amounts to a huge blow to the off-road community. What alternatives would I personally support? Those would be the No Action Alternative, Alternative Three, Alternative Four, and Alternative Five. Obviously, the No Action alternative is the best one for the OHV community, and Alternative Three is almost as good because the 29 Palms Marine Base would then expand to the east and south. Alternatives Four and Five seem like a good way to let the Marines train in Johnson Valley for two months of the year while the OHV community is allowed access the other ten. What does Johnson Valley mean to me? I've visited there many, many times over the years for both recreational off-roading and for work as an off-road journalist. In the Johnson Valley OHV area, I've covered competition events, shot vehicle features, attended organized trail rides, and tested off-road products. Access to Johnson Valley helps me make my living. As an off-road enthusiast and as a professional off-road journalist, I request that you avoid Alternative Six and instead choose from the No Action

Alternative, Alternative Three, Alternative Four, and Alternative Five.  
Sincerely, Kevin Blumer

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2149

**Last Name** Meyner

**First Name** Gus

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2150

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Friends, You have done a good job of complying with NEPA. I commend you for the hard work, diligence, and perseverance that you have invested in this project. Marines need the best possible training that can be given to them. At the same time, you will have your hands full dealing with and answering all the substantive comments from the public. They have brought up many good points, and I hereby incorporate all substantive comments by reference. I encourage you to work closely with others, both internally and externally, in ways that emphasize communication, collaboration, kindness, courtesy, consideration, compassion, empathy, positive reinforcement, and conservation. I am also writing to formally request that you keep my name/address on your mailing list and that you send me hard copies (via snailmail) of the following items once published: 1) Final EIS 2) Record of Decision Thanks Very Much, and Bravo Zulu!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2151

**Last Name** Erickson

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92132-5190 Dear Project Manager, I am writing in regard to the proposed expansion of the twenty-nine palms USMC base. After reviewing the six proposals along with the no option alternative I believe that the best option for the Marines to meet their training requirements is option three. I believe that option three is the best option because it represents the best long term training solution by keeping in place Johnson valley OHV area as a buffer zone between the Marine base and the growing population of the high desert. In reading all of the proposals set forth by the Marines I don't feel that adequate consideration was given to the effect that long term population growth of the high desert will have on the training area at twenty nine palms. I feel that as the population increase and more people live closer to the boundaries of the base, the Marines are going to run into an increasing amount of negative public opinion due to noise. Especially considering that the base expansion is meant to accommodate maneuvers that are going to be so large they cannot take place at any other Marine base in the United States. Thus, taking into account the potential continued expansion of the high desert community over the next 10-20 years, I feel that the logical choice is to expand the training area east away from the populated areas of the desert and leave in place Johnson valley as a buffer zone between the training area and the general population. Sincerely, Jeff Erickson 16751 Marie Ln. Huntington Beach CA. 92647

**Date Comment Received**

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2152

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I HAVE BEEN TO THE JOHNSON VALLEY/MEANS DRY LAKE AREA ONE TIME, WHAT AN AMAZING PLACE. IN MY PERSONAL OPINION IT WOULD BE A CRIME TO CLOSE THIS AREA TO PUBLIC ACCESS.PEOPLE LIVE HERE OR COME TO THIS AREA JUST TO EXPERIENCE WHAT CAN ONLY BE FOUND HERE.IS IT RIGHT TO CONTINUE TO LOCK THE PUBLIC OUT OF LAND THAT IS RIGHTFULLY THIER OWN AS CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES? I BELIEVE THE ANSWER IS NO, AND ANOTHER OPTION IN THIS CASE IS AVAILABLE AND SHOULD BE CHOSEN.I PLAN TO RETURN TO THIS AREA SEVERAL MORE TIMES.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2153

**Last Name** carlin

**First Name** kenneth

**Comment** My dad is retired Military and I agree we need places for them to train and protect us. but I am also an off roader and have watched are land asset disappear as our fee go up. I don't want to see it unless they open up other areas closed like across from glames and other area's up in that location. Thank you Ken carlin

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2154

**Last Name** Hoover

**First Name** Laura

**Comment** To Whom It May Concern, I am writing in regard to the 29 Palms Land Acquisition in Johnson Valley. I have been going to Johnson Valley for recreation for 35 years! I started going there when I was nine years old with a friend and her family and once I met my husband, several years later, we both discovered that we had been travelling to Johnson Valley for several years simultaneously. With that said, I believe it is rather apparent that both my husband and I love the Johnson Valley area and have raised our two sons going out there as well. I learned to drive out there. I learned to ride a motorcycle out there. Our sons have learned to ride out there. And of recent, we have been to Johnson Valley and had the pleasure to take our Jeep on several of the "Hammers" trails. We hosted a run with our local Jeep club out to the petroglyphs, and plan on attending the High Desert Round-Up this Memorial weekend. If the Johnson Valley OHV area were to be taken over by the Marines, these activities that my family and friends

and myself enjoy, will no longer be available for our enjoyment. I am urging that you do not expand the 29 Palms base west. If you must expand, then please, do so to the east and use some of that "wilderness" land that no one ever gets to see or enjoy. Signed, Laura Hoover

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2155

**Last Name** Stephens

**First Name** Aaron

**Comment** "Save The Hammers" is the battle cry from all of us who enjoy recreating in the Johnson Valley OHV Area. But more than just the "Hammers" is at stake. The whole of the Johnson Valley Recreation area will be lost by the 29 Palms Military Base Expansion. Recreation will be gutted. The remaining fringe areas left by the expansion will be narrow parcels between the pavement and the military boundary fence. This expansion plan will cause off road enthusiasts to go else where. But where? All of the adjacent land is "Wilderness" or private, State or National Park, Forrest or Monument. There is very little left out there due to the continuing zeal of the eco-minded legislatures who create "Wilderness" areas at a whim. Gone are the days when you could visit open desert areas to camp and explore without restrictions of your travel. More and more the people like me are squeezed. Access to "Public Land" is restricted. How many more Millions of acres of desert land do the military need? Look at a map and tell me, of the bases at Fort Irwin and 29 Palms, the Bombing ranges in Imperial County, How many more acres do they need? And this at a time when Military Fighting in the Mid East is on the decline. We look forward to

troop withdrawals in the next year. So why the base expansion??? Please, Please, Please!!! Do NOT Allow the expansion. It would be a criminal blow to People who enjoy the Johnson Valley area as it is and has always been. Sincerely, Aaron Stephens 65940 Buena Vista Ave. Desert Hot Springs, CA 92240

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2156

**Last Name** miller

**First Name** karl

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from

adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2157

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Dear Sir: The DEIS states: Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative

effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed. 3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative. The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources: DLess than Significant Impacts (LSI): • Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction. Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources. No Impacts (NI): No impact anticipated from airspace establishment. Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives. However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include: • Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries • Devaluation of surrounding private property. • Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries. Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this. The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas. They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands. The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events. Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources. Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution

and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher. -The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not. -These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources. -Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival. The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage. “Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn’t a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision.” –Desert Magazine 1944 The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves. The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant. <http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html> The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

**Comment ID** 2158

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion The Environmental Protection Agency’s Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) is attached. It totals toxic releases during the years 2007-2009, the latest report available. A “TRI release” is defined as the amount of on-site toxic chemical releases to air, water, underground injection, landfills and other land disposal, and the amount transferred off-site for disposal. The top ten facilities with the most chemical releases in California included Marine Camp Pendleton at #10. PBT Chemical releases are releases of Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemicals. Merriam-Webster defines “persistent” as “existing for along or longer than usual time or continuously.” DIt defines “bioaccumulation” as “the accumulation of a substance (such as a pesticide) in a living organism.” It defines “toxic” as “poisonous.” In other words, it means poisons that last a long time, and collect in the bodies of plants and animals and the animals that eat them. Of the top 10 California release sites, numbers 6-10 were military, one Army and four Marine, all in Southern California. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms is #7, with a little under half the PBT chemical releases that were measured at Camp Pendleton. Though the trend shown in the Inventory is generally downward for the state, if live fire combat training increases in intensity and duration on the scale the DEIS describes, MCAGCC will obviously rise on the list. Starting on Page 293, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement describes in detail the procedures used to comply with recording and reporting releases of TRI Chemicals. It addresses the Marines’ methods for dealing with hazardous material spill abatement and cleanups, and contaminated soils. “Munitions Constituents” (MC) from unexploded ordnance and other munitions, and their breakdown elements, are described and mapped for current and historical ranges. Potential migration into humans and animals is addressed with somewhat limited studies. Perchlorate is described as an indicator munitions constituent as it is an good example of PBT (see definitions above). Perchlorate recently came to public notice again as a constituent of the drinking water in Barstow, CA. Databases on hazardous wastes from many

sources and contaminated sites are described as not revealing any relevant sites. Formerly used defense sites are discussed. All are declared not relevant. On Page 293, one paragraph describes a total of 50 accidental releases, in 2002, of toxic substances and what was done about them. Deliberate releases and munitions constituents are not itemized. The discussion of toxic wastes ends on Page 301 of the DEIS. Nowhere is the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory mentioned, with its specific amounts, and the relative standing of military sites in general and MCAGCC in particular. Therefore the DEIS must be amended to show not only the methodology for reporting toxic contaminants but also the kinds and quantities. It must also clearly state estimates for any increases in toxic releases for each Alternative course of action. It must also state this information was missing in the draft document. On Page 295 is a map of munitions constituents loading areas on the existing Base. Maps must be added to the DEIS to show where planned MC loading areas would be in each Alternative course of action. On Page 796 it is stated that use of munitions under Alternative One would be similar to existing use, and therefore potential impacts from the use of munitions would be minimal. Since ordnance use is planned to be more intensive and of longer duration, the DEIS must be corrected to reflect that fact and state the draft document was in error. This must also be done for all the other Alternatives. Thank you Mike Hawkins 57873 Ivanhoe Drive Yucca Valley California 92284 Mphcdh2@wmconnect.com

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Munitions constituents and toxic chemical release reporting requirements are described in Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the EIS. As described in the EIS the Combat Center complies with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program, and all other federal, state, and local requirements regarding hazardous materials and wastes, and would continue to do so under the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2159

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion  
Dear Sir: The communities of Landers and Johnson Valley are in Postal Zip Code 92285. Landers borders the existing Marine Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms; Johnson Valley is directly southwest of it, and due south of the proposed westward expansion area. Environmental Justice provisions

are addressed in the DEIS because Federal Projects are not supposed to have disproportionate impacts against any ethnic, demographic or socio-economic group. IN POSTAL CODE 92285, CENSUS 2010 HAS STATED: • The population is 2,181. • The median age of the population is 49.5. 24.7% are 65 years and over. This is almost twice the percentage of people 65 and older in the US population (12.4%). These are very much senior citizen communities. • Many residents are retired and on fixed incomes. 39% of our population 16 and over is in the labor force, as compared to 69% in the US. • Families below poverty level: 20.8% In the US: 12.4% • Individuals below poverty level: 24.9% In the US: 12.4% • Disability status (population 5 years and over): 34.8% In the US: 19.3% And for good measure: • Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over): 25.1% In the US 12.7% (and we know many are proud Marines) [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=92285&\\_cityTown=92285&\\_state=&\\_zip=92285&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=92285&_cityTown=92285&_state=&_zip=92285&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y) The factors listed above indicate the project does raise issues of Environmental Justice for the residents of Landers and Johnson Valley. The DEIS states that EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice say there must be one or more such affected populations within the DEIS area (Page 533). However, very few live WITHIN the EIS area, and it is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents outside the EIS area will not be impacted. The scoping issues (Item 4.3.1.3) listed on the same page include: • Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries • Devaluation of surrounding private property. • Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. The contradiction is the DEIS states that the primary economic impacts would be from displacement of certain activities within the DEIS area causing financial and other hardships to surrounding areas. Therefore the DEIS must be revised to state the criteria for judging Environmental Justice are too narrow, and must state that these criteria also apply to populations outside the DEIS area. Anything less would be easily misunderstood by a less-than-careful reader. Landers and Johnson Valley are within the impact area of the DEIS because of activities that are associated with current activities emanating from the Marine Base, and proposed activities due to the expansion, are above, around and adjacent to Landers and Johnson Valley. To assert otherwise is disingenuous and misleading. The statement on Page 537 that increase of jobs on the Base would offset jobs lost in the area is self-serving and must be modified, as it does not address the fact that our employed and employable population are outside the 30-minute commute time discussed. Their ability to handle the costs of a longer must be included in the DEIS. The 30-minute commute time is impossible to determine, given traffic and road conditions vary widely throughout the area. The Marines' establishment of the 30-minute commute time is arbitrary. Landers and Johnson Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or

light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher. The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not. The fact that Landers and other communities have co-existed with the Base for decades is not germane to the discussion. Modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact. In my personal judgement, most of the residents near the Base and expansion areas are patriots, who support the Marines' dedication to excellent training of the forces who are willing to be sent out to fight where we no longer can or maybe never could. But the nature of Environmental Justice is a direct outgrowth of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that they fight to uphold. The DEIS must take a second look at the Base neighbors and their dilemma. The DEIS judgement is based on estimates and assumptions, therefore I may be allowed to assume that other neighboring communities will be impacted the same as Landers and Johnson Valley. Therefore, the DEIS conclusion under Item 4.3.2.5 and others must be changed and it must be stated for every Alternative action in the document: Certain socio-economic groups, including, but not limited to, seniors, retirees on fixed incomes, families and individuals below the poverty level, the disabled, and veterans residing in neighboring communities in percentages far greater than in the nation at large, will bear a disproportionate burden if the planned training and area expansions are put into place. THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT, The EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice must be added to and expanded to include populations outside the DEIS area, and that citing EO 12898 alone caused a potentially misleading contradiction in the draft document. It also must state, for each Alternative, that significant impacts will occur with respect to Environmental Justice. The DEIS must state what steps have been taken in previous actions at other Bases to insure equity and fairness in regards to Environmental Justice. The repeated assertion in this DEIS that mitigation is not possible means nothing can be done to insure equity and fairness, and the DEIS must state that fact prominently, and state the draft document had omitted it. Thank you Mike Hawkins 57873 Ivanhoe Drive Yucca Valley California 92284 Mphcdh2@wmconnect.com

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and

low- income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. All environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice.

**Comment ID** 2160

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As a land owner in the area, I have ridden in the OHV area for 35yrs and have complied with all rules, kept up and cleaned up[ the land like it was my own. We have to sound control (96db.s)/spark arresters. My kids have grown up riding the OHV area and now my grandkids. I know riding and camping in the OHV has kept us close. Making the OHV area smaller is cause for more accidents plus land damage.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2161

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** All I can say is it would be fair to have land for land. My children and now my grandchildren are enjoying this OHV area, and I would like to see more generations to come enjoy what we have for the past 35 yrs.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2162

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The Johnson Valley OHV area is a place where I grew up and now bring my own children to ride and enjoy family time. It's the only place I can interact with my parents, for they do not do any other activities that bring us together as a family. If this land is taken from us to enjoy family time, I foresee a distance coming between our family time. I grew up enjoying the time in Johnson Valley riding and camping and I want the same for my own children. It's something that they will remember and hopefully be able to do with their children someday.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact

to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2163

**Last Name** Bates

**First Name** Jerry

**Comment** While I dont have a particular argument over training viabliliy I do feel the expansion should go east instead of west. Just because the land classification is wilderness to the east does not mean that one classification is more important than another. The intended usage area affects all facets of humanity while and eastward expansion would not.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2164

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take away our off road ability in the Johnson Valley. My family and friends go there at least 10 times per year as it is one of the only places large enough for my off road car. In addition the area has some of the best trails in all of california. Please the military can use other places, Camp Pendelton or someplace that is not used regularly by the public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2165

**Last Name** Freymond

**First Name** Ric

**Comment** Please leave us our recreation. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2166

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Do not do lis,it is a robbery of public recreational land and it will drive down the land value and the economy of the Lucerne Valley ,we do not be

disturbed by the unwanted noise we are already hear from it. do not go west go east! all of the concerns boxes should be cheeked! This plan is an out rage to the Lucerne Valley.Expand East not west! damn you for even considering this plan.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2167

**Last Name** Duncan

**First Name** Tom

**Comment** I'm concerned that comments submitted about the 29 Palms Marine Base expansion, by myself and others, have not been received because of an error in the address on documentation,that has been released by you. I urge you to allow a extension beyond the May 26, 2011 deadline . Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2168

**Last Name** Lenhart

**First Name** Daniel

**Comment** While I fully support our Armed Forces and agree that our military can only perform as well as they train, I can only support the military encroachment on public lands if there is a fair trade for civilian use. I live near Camp Pendleton and rarely see any activity near the northern end of the base. Most other military installations, I'm sure, are similar. Personally, my family and I are avid OHV riders. My three teenage sons (the third generation of Johnson Valley riders from my family), my wife and myself are regular users of Johnson Valley. It is one of our favorite places to ride. I'm also a patriot and American proud of our military and agree that Johnson Valley is a viable location for large scale training ops. However, with large amounts of public lands being designated for special use, they are quickly changing from "public" use to "a few special groups" use. Practically any OHV use area is open to almost any use, licensed on-road vehicle use, horseback riding, hiking, bicycling, shooting, camping, etc. The problem is, not many OHV approved areas are left. "Public use" of lands is only useable by the public if your activities fit the designated use of the area. OHV land users need more areas opened for OHV use if existing OHV areas are going to be shut down. I think most OHV area users would agree with me. As the existing areas continue to shrink, the remaining areas continue to grow more overcrowded, making them a much more dangerous place to ride. Offer a fair trade and most of your opposition will support your efforts.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2169

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am a Johnson Valley land and home owner. I want it to be known that I consider the expansion of the Twentynine Palms Marine Corp Air Station completely unnecessary. Please do not expand for the simple reason that the air station acreage is, without a doubt, ample. For the sake of what is right with this country, please do not infringe on my taxpaying right to have an area of land for me and my family to continue to go outside of the big city for rest, recreation and relaxation. The family that plays together, stays together. Sincerely, Richard Greer Johnson Valley

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2170

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate

training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2171

**Last Name** Shteir

**First Name** Seth

**Comment** Dear Sir or Madam: The National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is a nonprofit dedicated to "Protecting and enhancing America's national parks for present and future generations." On behalf of our 342,000 members nationwide, NPCA would like to thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Twenty-nine Palms Air Ground Combat Center Base expansion. Our members care deeply for America's shared natural and cultural heritage that is preserved by units of the National Park System. NPCA recognizes both the need for military preparedness and the importance of maintaining existing legal

routes and areas for off-road vehicle recreation. Therefore, it is not our intent in this letter to advocate for or oppose any of the proposed alternatives, but rather to raise awareness of how a significant reduction of designated off road vehicle acreage may affect Joshua Tree National Park, the Mojave National Preserve and other sensitive lands, including designated wilderness, national monuments and Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC). The preferred alternative, alternative six, would allow the Marine Expeditionary Brigade to train, but would accommodate continued public access to 40,000 acres of what is now the Johnson Valley Off Road Vehicle Recreation Area during the ten months of the year the Marines would not use the area for exercises. This alternative, while ensuring our troops are combat ready, significantly reduces the total acreage of Johnson Valley Off Road Vehicle Recreation Area available for off-road vehicle use. A lack of law enforcement rangers, signs and monitoring of wilderness and designated routes could result in increased illegal incursions into ecologically sensitive Bureau of Land Management areas, Joshua Tree National Park and the Mojave National Preserve, and areas being conserved to protect sensitive animals, plants, and cultural resources. The need for signs, law enforcement rangers and monitoring programs becomes more critical under this scenario. Currently, the California Desert Bureau of Land Management has one full time law enforcement ranger for every 1.2 million acres. NPCA asks that these cumulative impacts to federally protected lands be considered in this analysis. NPCA requests that, if appropriate, mitigation funds for a potential base expansion be invested in programs to sign and monitor designated off road vehicle routes, to protect wilderness, national park boundaries, and sensitive conservation lands, and to provide support for Bureau of Land Management and National Park Service law enforcement rangers. We must be thoughtful about not over-burdening those responsible for providing safety and who protect our shared natural and cultural resources inside and surrounding our national parks and other protected lands and species. Sincerely, Seth Shteir, National Parks Conservation Association

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2172

**Last Name** Duncan

**First Name** Tom

**Comment** My Father, Capt. Louis E. Duncan, USMC,ret., Homesteaded our property 50 years ago. I understand the Johnson Valley area was the last land that was homesteaded by the U.S. Department of Interior, thus it's value as a historically sensitive area. I don't believe the DEIS study addressed this issue. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

**Comment ID** 2173

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Where are the OHV's expected to 'play'. More and more of their space is being taken away from them.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 2174

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We here in Lucerne Valley, Ca are in an area of lots of space for each other .We enjoy the freedom of peace and quiet except when the Marine Corps are doing their war exercises If the expansion goes through it will negatively affect our lives by bring guns and other weapons to close to our children and families If your plans go to the west, it will interfere with our recreational and fun areas That we enjoy right now .Also our land values will go down,our small community will find our community to stay alive . You would be taking away our right to the pursuit of happiness. Go east not west!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. However, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2175

**Last Name** Duncan

**First Name** Tom

**Comment** As an owner of more than one property in Johnson Valley,I worry about the air quality for myself and family when they visit. The wind can be extreme in the area, and with large military vehicles, the dust and wind combination

will create air quality issues for those of us living or staying there. The DEIS study did not address this important health issue. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. It is acknowledged that the proposed training exercises will generate substantial amounts of fugitive dust, as shown in the EIS tables that present estimations of air emissions for each project alternative. The EIS dispersion modeling analyses determined that fugitive dust emissions would produce less than significant impacts to ambient PM10 levels for Alternatives 1, 2, and 4-6. However, Alternative 3 would contribute to an exceedance of the national ambient air quality standard for PM10. The EIS only proposes to control fugitive dust emissions from proposed construction activities, as it would be infeasible to control fugitive dust generated from the proposed training exercises.

**Comment ID** 2176

**Last Name** murdica

**First Name** william

**Comment** please don't take johnson valley. the hammer trails are the best rock crawling trails close to us . we camp and jeep out there at lease 10 times a year because it is close to us . take the land that is not being used east of amboy rd. there is plenty of empty land to train in out there.thanks william murdica

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2177

**Last Name** McNulty

**First Name** Kevin

**Comment** Johnson Valley and the OHV areas are enjoyed by thousands of tourists, off- road enthusiasts, and families every year. Closure of this land would be a travesty to those who love, respect, and enjoy our beautiful high deserts. The recreational lands in and around Johnson Valley also bring in an irreplaceable revenue to the communities - The loss of this revenue would make hardships even worse, especially in these tough economic times. We are certain that the lands surrounding 29 Palms Marine Base can be enjoyed by all while still maintaining the exceptional training the base provides the Marines we are all so proud of. Both the Marine Base and the open recreational lands have enjoyed a peaceful and safe existence for as long as the base has been in 29 Palms. We can see no reason would this should change if the land is left open for recreation. Please, for the sake of thousands, reconsider the closures and work with the communities and groups to finding an alternative solution to the closures.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2178

**Last Name** Tzvetanov

**First Name** Ivan

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is

not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2179

**Last Name** weir

**First Name** joshua

**Comment** let us ride, do not close this great riding area where familys spend time.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2180

**Last Name** Gartner

**First Name** Al

**Comment** The closing of the majority of the Johnson Valley Off road area will likely result in increased trespass and damage to both public and private lands with its resulting destruction of wildlife habitat. Those of us who live in rural areas will be subjected to increased noise, and disruption in our everyday lives as off roaders seek adjacent areas to recreate in. This will result in more confrontations between riders and residents. These issues will have to be addressed should the proposed expansion take place. Funding for local law and code enforcement and emergency services should be provided as well as the equipment necessary to perform these duties. Permanent well placed information kiosks with easy to read maps and statements of the law should be included throughout the surrounding areas. Information dispensed should include radio, television and print media with an emphasis on schools and OHV riders groups. An especially strong effort in this area should be made during long holiday weekends. There should be at least yearly reviews of the effectiveness of these mitigation measures held with stakeholders in the effected areas and adjustments made as warranted. Being close to the proposed new Poleline Road boundary in the expansion south into the Wonder Valley will also poise a problem with increased aircraft and vehicular noise during maneuvers for residents of this area. Air quality is also a major concern.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts.

Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Please see Section 4.8 of the EIS for information on expected impact on Air Quality.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2181
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Johnson valley is a place of recreation and enjoyment for many in the world of Offroad. Family frequent johnson valley year around to make memmories and have a good time. By taking this land you will be hurting many people and taking memories from many generations to come. Please don't take Johnson valley for the sake of the entire Offroad community. Thank you, Travis M.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/25/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2182

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** ARE YOU KIDDING ME ? OUT OF THAT WHOLE DESERT YOU HAVE TO TAKE AWAY MORE PUBLIC LAND?WAKE UP CALIF. PEOPLE, WHATS NEXT?

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2183

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2184

**Last Name** wreesman

**First Name** jacob

**Comment** I have spent much time in this beautiful place and to close it down to the public so that the government can only have access would be a tragedy. There are thousands of families that spend quality time in Johnson valley along with hundreds of business that that use this area for testing, filming, racing, and saftey demonstrations. The closure of this area will have a massive negative financial impact on the local community and businesses across the country. A possible ghost town effect also. I am begging you to leave this land open to the public! Thank you for your time. -Jake Wreesman

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and

direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2185

**Last Name** wreesman

**First Name** jacob

**Comment** Don't close this amazing plot of land to the public! We need it more than the government!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2186

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I oppose the land aquisition. Restricting public access to so much land in southern California is not fair to those who use it on a regular basis.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2187

**Last Name** Ransom

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** the offroad community has to small an area set aside now. taking away a large portion of the Johnson Valley recreation area will squeeze way to many offroaders into to small an area for safe use, the area will soon become over used. When the marines are fighting a war there are civilians in the area. so they should share this area with the civilians that are there and learn to not harm civilians when at war..

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2188

**Last Name** latham

**First Name** connie

**Comment** reveiwng land acquis. documents, request to be added to mailing list.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Your information has been added to the mailing list per your request.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2189
<b>Last Name</b>	MUNSON
<b>First Name</b>	BETTY
<b>Comment</b>	COMMENT ATTACHED
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/25/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 1 of 10)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285  
760-364-2646 e-mail: ranchotaj@gmail.com

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The Executive Summary on Page 4 explains why the USMC is proposing the establishment of a large-scale training facility at MCAGCC 29Palms. It says the Marine Corps has a requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Air Ground Task Force, and the existing facilities are inadequate.

The underlying strategy was designed over a decade ago. Times and technology have changed. It appears the very foundation for this strategy is changing.

<http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/gates-time-has-come-to/>  
Posted by SWJ Editors on August 13, 2010 4:01 AM  
**Gates Orders Marine Corps Force Structure Review** by Jim Garamone of American Forces Press Service. An excerpt follows:

Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered a thorough force structure review of the Marine Corps to determine what an expeditionary force in readiness should look like in the 21st century. There are questions about the mission of the Marine Corps, Gates said. Before World War II, the Marines very successfully conducted "small wars" in the western hemisphere. The service also developed the rationale and logistics needed to conduct amphibious warfare. During World War II, the Corps was wholly dedicated to landing on the beaches in the South and Central Pacific. America's first offensive of World War II was when Marines landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal and began the campaign against Japan in August 1942. Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are just a few of the landings Marines made. Since then, Marines have fought on the beaches, mountains and trenches of Korea, the highlands and rice paddies of Vietnam, and the deserts of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although many of these operations saw Marines initially projected from the sea, "they soon turned into long, grinding, ground engagements," Gates said.

Page 1 of 10  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 1 of 10):**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the Draft EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 2 of 10)**

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 2 of 10):**

The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time.

Also see **Gates: Time has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps** by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and **Defense Chief Gates Orders Review of Marines' Role** by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times.

A **more recent article** dated Mar. 2, 2011, says that Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, spoke to news media about the 2010 Force Structure Review (formed to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of the Marine Corps and its role within the joint force in a fiscally-restrained post-Afghanistan environment; and I quote).

Two of the recommendations from the Review are:

-A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,800 when conditions in Afghanistan warrant, and  
-Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental headquarters from eight to seven; infantry battalions from 27-24); a reduction in cannon artillery battalions (nine to seven; but a reorganization of batteries to support distributed operations), and a reduction in armor (10 companies to 8).

See more at <http://www.marines.mil/unit/hqmc/Pages/RestoringbalanceinMarineCorps.aspx>

The Force Structure Review of 2010 itself is included here, Pages 4-10. Its objectives do not jibe with the objectives stated for the MCAGCC expansion.

The very foundation for this Draft Environmental Impact Study is outdated.

Page 4 says that the training requirement is drawn from an earlier Marine Strategy 21 for 2000.

Page 77: Land Use Requirements Study was completed in July of 2005 and based on the earlier training requirements.

On Page 78 it is stated:

1. that MEB-size training is declared (in 2008) by the Marine Corps to be an enduring requirement
2. therefore existing land and air space is insufficient,
3. therefore land acquisition is necessary

Any study of military history shows the last thing any fighting force needs is an enduring requirement. Otherwise, we would still have muzzleloaders, horse-drawn caissons or Sherman tanks.

Therefore the judgement that MEB-sized training is required is flawed.

Therefore the judgment that existing land and air space is insufficient is called into question.

Therefore the judgement that land acquisition is necessary is flawed.

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 3 of 10)**

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 3 of 10):**

Because the Marines state they must train as they fight, it does not mean they are not already doing so, or that they cannot make quick judgements based on today's conditions for training requirements for tomorrow. Because so much time has been put into this outdated plan does not mean it must roll downhill without taking another look.

The document must be reviewed and anywhere outdated requirements are defined for MEB-sized training, and the existing facilities are declared inadequate, they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere ideal range requirements are mentioned they must be justified to today's needs. Everywhere airspace requirements are defined they must be justified to today's needs.

The statement on Page 192 that the No-Action Alternative would not meet the needs for the proposed action must be reconsidered in this light also.

Otherwise the entire document must be discarded as it is based on outdated decisions and information.

Thank you for your attention,

Betty Munson

Comment ID: 2189 (Page 4 of 10)

Response to Comment 2189 (Page 4 of 10):

**Reshaping America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness**

**Report of the 2010 Marine Corps  
Force Structure Review Group**

March 14, 2011

For media inquiries please contact: Colonel Thomas V. Johnson, USMC, Marine Corps Combat  
Development Command (MCCDC) Director of Public Affairs, (703) 432-0304

Page 4 of 10  
Comment

Comment ID: 2189 (Page 5 of 10)

Response to Comment 2189 (Page 5 of 10):

DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters, United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20350-3000

14 March 2011

**Foreword**

In the fall of 2010 the Marine Corps conducted a Force Structure Review (FSR) to evaluate and refine the organization, posture and capabilities required of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness in a post-OEF security environment. The FSR was conducted by senior field grade officers and civilian Marines under the direct cognizance of an executive steering group comprised of the Deputy Commandants, the Commanders of Marine Corps Forces Command and Marine Corps Forces Pacific, and the Commanding Generals of our Marine Expeditionary Forces. The participants of the FSR brought extensive operational experience across the range of military operations, along with a deep breadth of knowledge regarding capabilities, force organization, training and education, equipment, deployment, employment and sustainment to inform the process. Additionally, numerous subject matter experts from within and outside the Marine Corps contributed their knowledge and insights to the FSR. The work was routinely reviewed and guided by me and the Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps.

This report is promulgated to promote understanding and to start implementation of FSR recommendations. Additional analysis through established capability development constructs will determine the how and timeline of the execution and implementation of FSR decisions.

  
JAMES F. AMOS  
General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Commandant of the Marine Corps

Comment ID: 2189 (Page 6 of 10)

Response to Comment 2189 (Page 6 of 10):

Reshaping America's  
Expeditionary Force in Readiness  
Report of the 2010 Marine Corps  
Force Structure Review Group

*"The Marine Corps is America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness—a balanced air-ground-logistics team. We are forward-deployed and forward-engaged: shaping, training, deterring, and responding to all manner of crises and contingencies. We create options and decision space for our Nation's leaders. Alert and ready, we respond to today's crisis, with today's force ... TODAY. Responsive and scalable, we team with other services, allies and interagency partners. We enable and participate in joint and combined operations of any magnitude. A middleweight force, we are light enough to get there quickly, but heavy enough to carry the day upon arrival, and capable of operating independent of local infrastructure. We operate throughout the spectrum of threats—irregular, hybrid, conventional—or the shady areas where they overlap, Marines are ready to respond whenever the Nation calls ... wherever the President may direct."*

—General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps

Purpose

The 2010 Marine Corps Force Structure Review convened to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of America's Expeditionary Force in Readiness and affirm its role within the joint force in a complex and uncertain post-OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM-Afghanistan security environment that is going to be further challenged by fiscal constraints.

Geostrategic Challenge

The geostrategic environment has changed dramatically in the last two decades, shifting from a competition between superpowers to a world of increasing instability and conflict, characterized by poverty, competition for resources, urbanization, overpopulation and extremism. Failed states or those that cannot adequately govern their territory can become safe havens for terrorist, insurgent and criminal groups that threaten the U.S. and our allies. Characterized by inherently unpredictable hybrid threats that combine irregular and conventional capabilities in a highly lethal manner, this environment demands a flexible, adaptable, and versatile military force that is ready and capable of being forward-deployed and forward-engaged, building partnerships, and immediately responding to crises or contingencies. Responding to a wide range of crises in a timely manner will require regionally-focused headquarters and forces that are both forward-postured and immediately deployable with a minimum of strategic lift. Sea-based forces, in particular, will be invaluable for discrete engagement activities, rapid crisis response, and sustainable power projection.

Page 6 of 10  
Comment

Comment ID: 2189 (Page 7 of 10)

Response to Comment 2189 (Page 7 of 10):

The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Marine Corps

Addressing these challenges, the 21<sup>st</sup> century Marine Corps builds on our historic role as the Nation's crisis response force and provides "best value" in terms of capability, cost, and readiness relative to the operational requirements of our Geographic Combatant Commanders (GCC). The Marine Corps' force structure must provide a strategically mobile, *middleweight force* optimized for rapid crisis response and forward-presence. It must be light enough to leverage the flexibility and capacity of amphibious shipping, yet heavy enough to accomplish the mission. Larger than special operations forces, but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we must be able to engage and respond quickly – often from the sea – with enough force to carry the day upon arrival.



The dual demands of sustained forward presence and sufficient lift for the assault echelons of two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) result in a requirement for 38 amphibious ships. Given fiscal constraints, however, the Navy and Marine Corps have agreed to accept risk with 33 ships, increasing the imperative to design a lean and effective force structure. We will also explore options for employing Marines from a wider variety of Navy ships, seeking innovative naval solutions to GCC requirements.

Furthermore, our force structure must be able to exploit the carrying capacity of maritime prepositioning ships and the speed of strategic airlift. As necessary, we must be able to aggregate Marine Corps capabilities, often provided by our reserve component, as well as integrate with capabilities provided by Joint Force, Coalition or interagency partners for sustained operations ashore. The ability of Marines to rapidly aggregate from widely dispersed locations to form cohesive Marine Air-Ground Task Forces (MAGTFs) is the foundation of our organization. MAGTFs enable coordinated action throughout the range of military operations.

Re-Shaping Marine Corps Capabilities and Capacities

The imperative for the Marine Corps is to preserve capabilities developed since 9/11, expand our engagement efforts, respond to crisis, and still be able to project power for the most dangerous threat scenarios. To that end we will accept a degree of risk by reducing our active component capacity for conducting multiple, major sustained operations ashore, relying on an

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 8 of 10)**

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 8 of 10):**

“operationalized” reserve component to mitigate that risk. Of necessity, our force structure represents many judiciously considered factors and makes pragmatic trade-offs in capabilities and capacities to achieve a posture that creates opportunity and provides an operational stance that enables flexibility and rapid response. The resulting force structure described in this report:

- reduces the end strength of the active component of the Marine Corps from 202,000 to approximately 186,800 following the completion of Marine Corps operations in Afghanistan;
- provides a force optimized for forward-presence, which facilitates both ongoing engagement activities and rapid crisis response;
- provides readiness for immediate deployment and employment;
- re-shapes organizations, capabilities, and capacities to increase aggregate utility and flexibility across the range of military operations;
- properly balances critical capabilities and enablers;
- creates an operationalized reserve component without any reductions in reserve force structure; and
- creates opportunity for more closely integrated operations with our Navy, Special Operations, and inter-agency partners.

This plan positions the Marine Corps to respond to the most likely missions while preserving the capability to project punishing combat power when required. The cornerstone of the future Marine Corps rests on the quality and flexibility of our Marines, which allow us to support the joint force commanders’ diverse requirements. This is enabled by:

- revising our manpower assignment policies and training tracks to increase the skills and maturity of our junior leaders, particularly within our infantry squads and fire support teams;
- increasing unit readiness within the operating forces by ensuring 99 percent manning of enlisted billets and 95 percent manning of officer billets; and
- resourcing five regionally-focused MEB command elements, with habitually aligned subordinate elements, to improve effectiveness and speed of response.

Other key actions include:

- tailoring Marine divisions, aircraft wings, and logistics groups to ensure sufficient type, quantity of force and resiliency to meet GCC presence, engagement and response requirements;

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 9 of 10)**

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 9 of 10):**

- maintaining the capacity and capabilities to conduct amphibious operations across the range of military operations;
- increasing the depth, availability and responsiveness of our combat service support capabilities by reorganizing Marine logistics groups to establish standing combat logistics battalions habitually aligned to specific Marine expeditionary units and infantry regiments;
- capitalizing on the ISR, C2 and future strike capabilities of unmanned aircraft systems via a 25% increase in capacity;
- reorganizing our intelligence collection and exploitation capabilities to enhance readiness by directly linking deployed forces, garrison support and the intelligence community;
- increasing capacity for cyber network defense, exploitation and attack operations by augmenting our communication and radio battalions, and by increasing the structure of Marine Corps Forces Cyberspace Command;
- enhancing capabilities to conduct and manage battlefield biometric, forensic, and law enforcement operations by creating a law enforcement support battalion within each Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF);
- retaining and better integrating the training, advising, and assistance organizations designed to enable and enhance irregular warfare capabilities, partner-nation engagement, and cultural understanding;
- strengthening the capabilities of Marine Special Operations Command through a 44% increase in critical combat support and combat service support Marines;
- increasing support to U.S. Army and partner-nation forces by adding another air and naval gunfire liaison company; and
- reducing overhead in the supporting establishment where parallel or duplicative functions could be efficiently combined or eliminated, including conversion of certain military billets to civilian positions while achieving an overall reduction in civilian personnel.

Risk Mitigation

Reshaping the Marine Corps from a wartime footing of 202,000 Marines to a force of approximately 186,800 imposes some risk. All proposed force structure changes were wargamed against approved Department of Defense scenarios and selected operation plans. The resulting force will be capable of operating across the range of military operations but will assume some risk in the capacity to conduct simultaneous major combat operations and campaigns. This risk is created by combining a MARFOR with a MEF headquarters, preserving the core warfighting

**Comment ID: 2189 (Page 10 of 10)**

**Response to Comment 2189 (Page 10 of 10):**

capabilities of this MEF while expanding the responsibilities of its leadership and staff. Additionally, select air and ground units will be eliminated from the active component. To mitigate this reduced capacity in the active component, we will more completely operationalize our reserve forces. We will work with our civilian leadership and elected representatives to revise public law to allow more responsive access to reserve forces.

Efficiency for Operational Effectiveness

Tomorrow's Marine Corps, though smaller than the force conducting current overseas contingency operations, is not simply a reduced version of today's Marine Corps nor is it a reversion to the pre-9/11 posture. We believe these force structure changes are significant and compelling. The most significant force structure changes include:

- the consolidation of a MARFOR with a MEF headquarters to eliminate higher headquarters overhead;
- a 13% reduction in ground combat forces, to include an 11% reduction in infantry, a 20% reduction in cannon artillery, and a 20% reduction in armor;
- a 16% reduction in fixed-wing tactical aviation squadrons;
- a 9% reduction in logistics, with a significant organizational restructuring to enhance responsiveness;
- a 7% reduction in Marines assigned to non-operational billets;
- a 13% reduction in the civilian work force; and
- placing the reserve division, wing and logistics group headquarters in cadre status and eliminating the Mobilization Command headquarters by assimilating associated functions into Marine Forces Reserve headquarters.

**Comment ID** 2190

**Last Name** augino

**First Name** daniel

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Daniel J Augino

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

2191

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

OF ALL THE LAND THAT COULD BE TAKEN ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE BASE, THAT NO ONE WANTS. THEIR IS NO REASON TO TAKE SOME THING THAT MEANS SO MUCH TO SO MANY PEOPLE. IT IS A GREAT, & SAFE PLACE FOR FAMILYS TO SPEND AND A GREAT PLACE TO ENJOY RIDING. TAKEING THIS LAND WOULD REALLY HURT EVERYONES ENJOYMENT OF THE DESERT.

**Date Comment Received**

5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2192

**Last Name** Eisele

**First Name** Sarah

**Comment** I just wanted to let you guys know that you guys aren't making a good decision wanting to take over Johnson Valley for your use. This is a public area, one of the most amazing, and largest areas we have in the United States. I have been going here with my family my whole life, for fun on weekends, to spend the holidays, and also to watch the off-road races. I know A LOT of other families are the same way. This is one of my most treasured and favorite places to go and I know I'm not the only one who feels this way. It's a very loved area of a lot of people. The Marines have other options available, so why don't you leave our land alone? We hardly have any land left to ride on as it is! Plus, Johnson Valley brings in a lot of out-of-town people that bring money to the town of Lucerne. Without that, Lucerne is going to turn into a ghost town. You can head EAST and take up that land that nobody cares for anyways. I know some of it is "protected" wilderness areas.. but are the Marines really that afraid of those environmentalists that they have to come after us? I do support the Marines and what they do, but not this. This is designated public land, and taking this from us is unfair and pretty shitty on the Marines part. We will be left without a place to ride, which will only cause more illegal off-roading. Please do not take our beloved Johnson Valley, without it, mine and thousands of other peoples lives are going to change, and that's not for the better. Sincerely, Sarah Eisele

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2193

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** There was no attachment uploaded with this comment.

**Comment ID** 2194

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2194 (Page 1 of 2)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285  
760-364-2646 e-mail: ranchotaj@gmail.com

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

Since the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement means it requires a lot of time to study and assimilate; and since there are still stakeholders who are only now hearing of the expansion plans; and since there is confusion as to lack of correct information where to address public comments, calling into question the Marines' good-faith efforts to elicit those comments, **it is requested that the public comment period for the Draft EIS be extended at least another 60 days.**

The Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) totals toxic releases during the years 2007-2009, the latest report available.

A "TRI release" is defined as the amount of on-site toxic chemical releases to air, water, underground injection, landfills and other land disposal, and the amount transferred off-site for disposal. The top ten facilities with the most chemical releases in California included Marine Camp Pendleton at #10.

PBT Chemical releases are releases of Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemicals. Merriam-Webster defines "persistent" as "existing for a long or longer than usual time or continuously." It defines "bioaccumulation" as "the accumulation of a substance (such as a pesticide) in a living organism." It defines "toxic" as "poisonous." In other words, it means poisons that last a long time, and collect in the bodies of plants and animals and the animals that eat them.

Of the top 10 California sites, numbers 6-10 were military, one Army and four Marine, all in Southern California. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms is #7, with a little under half the PBT chemical releases that were measured at Camp Pendleton.

Page 1 of 2  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2194 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Munitions constituents and toxic chemical release reporting requirements are described in Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the EIS. As described in the EIS the Combat Center complies with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program, and all other federal, state, and local requirements regarding hazardous materials and wastes, and would continue to do so under the proposed action.

**Comment ID: 2194 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment 2194 (Page 2 of 2):**

Though the trend shown in the Inventory is generally downward for the state, if live fire combat training increases in intensity and duration on the scale the DEIS describes, MCAGCC will obviously rise on the list.

Starting on Page 293, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement goes into detail the procedures used to comply with recording and reporting releases of TRI Chemicals. It addresses the Marines' methods for dealing with hazardous material spill abatement and cleanups, and contaminated soils.

"Munitions Constituents (MC) from unexploded ordnance and other munitions, and their breakdown elements are described and mapped for current and historical ranges. Potential migration into humans and animals is addressed with somewhat limited studies. Perchlorate is considered an indicator munitions constituent as it is an good example of PBT (see definitions above). It recently came to public notice again as it appeared in the drinking water of Barstow, CA.

Databases on hazardous wastes from many sources and contaminated sites are described as not revealing any relevant sites. Formerly used defense sites are discussed. All are declared not relevant.

On Page 293, one paragraph describes a total of 50 accidental releases, in 2002, of toxic substances and what was done about them. Deliberate releases and munitions constituents are not itemized. The discussion of toxic wastes ends on Page 301 of the DEIS. Nowhere is the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory mentioned, with its specific amounts, and the relative standing of military sites in general and MCAGCC in particular.

Therefore the DEIS must be corrected to show not only the methodology for reporting toxic contaminants but also the kinds and quantities. It must also clearly state estimates for any increases in toxic releases for each Alternative course of action.

On Page 796 it is stated that use of munitions under Alternative One would be similar to existing use, and therefore potential impacts from the use of munitions would be minimal. Since ordnance use is planned to be more intensive and of longer duration, the DEIS must be corrected to reflect that fact and state the draft document was in error. This must also be done for all the other Alternatives.

On Page 295 is a map of munitions constituents loading areas on the existing base. Maps must be added to the DEIS to show where planned MC loading areas would be in each Alternative course of action.

Thank you,

Betty Munson

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2195

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED ON ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2195 (Page 1 of 3)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The communities of Landers and Johnson Valley are in Postal Zip Code 92285.

Landers borders the existing Marine Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms; Johnson Valley is directly southwest of it, and due south of the proposed westward expansion area.

**Environmental Justice** provisions are addressed in the DEIS because Federal Projects are not supposed to have disproportionate impacts against any ethnic, demographic or socio-economic group.

IN POSTAL CODE 92285, CENSUS 2010 HAS STATED:

- The population is 2,181.
  - The median age of the population is 49.5. 24.7% are 65 years and over. This is almost twice the percentage of people 65 and older in the US population (12.4%). These are very much senior citizen communities.
  - Many residents are retired and on fixed incomes. 39% of our population 16 and over is in the labor force, as compared to 69% in the US.
  - Families below poverty level: 20.8% In the US: 12.4%
  - Individuals below poverty level: 24.9% In the US: 12.4%
  - Disability status (population 5 years and over): 34.8% In the US: 19.3%
- And for good measure:
- Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over): 25.1% In the US 12.7% (and we know many are proud Marines)

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=92285&\\_cityTown=92285&\\_state=&\\_zip=92285&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=92285&_cityTown=92285&_state=&_zip=92285&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y)

Page 1 of 3  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2195 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and low-income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. All environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: 2195 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment 2195 (Page 2 of 3):

The factors listed above indicate the project does raise issues of Environmental Justice for the residents of Landers and Johnson Valley.

The DEIS states that EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice say there must be one or more such affected populations within the DEIS area (Page 533). However, very few live WITHIN the EIS area, and it is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents outside the EIS area will not be impacted. The scoping issues (Item 4.3.1.3) listed on the same page include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
- Devaluation of surrounding private property.
- Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.

The contradiction is, the DEIS states that the primary economic impacts would be from displacement of certain activities *within* the DEIS area causing financial and other hardships to surrounding areas. Therefore the DEIS must be revised to state the criteria for judging Environmental Justice are too narrow, and must state that these criteria also apply to populations *outside* the DEIS area. Anything less would be easily misunderstood by a less-than-careful reader. Landers and Johnson Valley are within the impact area of the DEIS because of activities that are associated with current activities emanating from the Marine Base, and proposed activities due to the expansion, are above, around and adjacent to Landers and Johnson Valley. To assert otherwise is disingenuous and misleading.

The statement on Page 537 that increase of jobs on the Base would offset jobs lost in the area is self-serving and must be modified, as it does not address the fact that our employed and employable population are outside the 30-minute commute time discussed. Their ability to handle the costs of a longer must be included in the DEIS. The 30-minute commute time is impossible to determine, given traffic and road conditions vary widely throughout the area. The Marines' establishment of the 30-minute commute time is arbitrary.

Landers and Johnson Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it states or implies it does not.

The fact that Landers and other communities have co-existed with the Base for decades is not germane to the discussion. Modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact.

**Comment ID: 2195 (Page 3 of 3)**

**Response to Comment 2195 (Page 3 of 3):**

In my personal judgement, most of the residents near the Base and expansion areas are patriots, who support the Marines' dedication to excellent training of the forces who are willing to be sent out to fight where we no longer can or maybe never could. But the nature of Environmental Justice is a direct outgrowth of the life, liberty and pursuit of happiness that they fight to uphold. The preparers of this draft must take a second look at the Base neighbors and their dilemma.

The DEIS judgement is based on estimates and assumptions, therefore I may be allowed to assume that other neighboring communities will be impacted the same as Landers and Johnson Valley.

Therefore, the DEIS conclusion under Item 4.3.2.5 and others must be changed, and it must be stated for every Alternative action in the document:  
Certain socio-economic groups, including, but not limited to, seniors, retirees on fixed incomes, families and individuals below the poverty level, the disabled, and veterans residing in neighboring communities in percentages far greater than in the nation at large, will bear a disproportionate burden if the planned training and area expansions are put into place.

THROUGHOUT THE DOCUMENT, The EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice must be added to and expanded to include populations *outside* the DEIS area, and that citing EO 12898 alone caused a potentially misleading contradiction in the draft document. It also must state, for each Alternative, that significant impacts will occur with respect to Environmental Justice.

The DEIS must state what steps have been taken in previous actions at other Bases to insure equity and fairness in regards to Environmental Justice. The repeated assertion in this DEIS that mitigation is not possible means nothing can be done to insure equity and fairness, and the DEIS must state that fact prominently, and state the draft document had omitted it.

Thank you,

Betty Munson

**Comment ID** 2196

**Last Name** Tweedy

**First Name** Diana

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. We are becoming an endangered species and I know that many of your best marines are off road enthusiasts. Our sport is compatible with the military and produces some of your best men. Don't needlessly kill our sport by taking away one of the few areas that we still have in Southern California. I go to Johnson Valley whenever I am in the area. I am sure there are other areas that you can use for training. Please spare our treasured riding area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while

also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2197

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Since the information about the address was incorrect.....PLEASE give the return comments an extension of time to respond. I own property in the Johnson Valley area and I agree that our military needs a place to "practice", BUT Means Dry Lake is NOT the direction they should go for practice. There is land that is EAST of the base that better suits their needs and the needs of the residents.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2198

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED HISTORIC COMMUNITIES

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2198 (Page 1 of 4)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The DEIS states:  
Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

**3.11 Cultural Resources.** The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:

Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

Page 1 of 4  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2198 (Page 1 of 4):**

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

Comment ID: 2198 (Page 2 of 4)

Response to Comment 2198 (Page 2 of 4):

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.

It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources *outside* the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:

- Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries
  - Devaluation of surrounding private property.
  - Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.
- All would occur *outside* the acquisition study boundaries.

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

Comment ID: 2198 (Page 3 of 4)

Response to Comment 2198 (Page 3 of 4):

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

The attractions of elbow room and history are negated by the realities of living with startling noise, and fear of damage.

*"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision."*

—Desert Magazine 1944

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves. The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant.  
<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

Thank you for your attention,

Betty Munson

Comment ID: 2198 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment 2198 (Page 4 of 4):



Page 4 of 4  
Comment

**Comment ID** 2199

**Last Name** Aston

**First Name** Gregory

**Comment** In regards to the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment AKA 29 Palms Expansion. Alternatives 1-6 are unacceptable. Expansion of this training facility needs to be done in another area so that Johnson Valley remains open to the Public. Reactivation of WWII era facilities adjacent to or near the current facility would better serve the needs of the Public & the Department of Defense. Some WWII sites including those under BLM, and USDA oversight have been overlooked or inappropriately designated. These areas might better suit DOD & Public Land use needs. At a time when users are increasing & acreage for OHV use on Public lands is decreasing a more thorough review of all former training facilities must be done before proceeding with any of the current alternatives.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2200

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Our family has enjoyed Johnson Valley for many years, for camping, offroading, and family get-togethers. All we see is our public land closing at a huge rate. There is never a replacement or optional area to go to after a land closer. We are asking to keep our public land open so we may still have a legal offroading area to use in the future. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

**Comment ID** 2201

**Last Name** Ames

**First Name** John

**Comment** Do not expand 29 palms marine base into the Johnson Valley o.h.v. area. There is plenty of room in the desert to go the other direction away from the communities of Lucerne, Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo heights and Yucca Valley. It makes no sense bringing live fire exercises closer to residents in these communities. It makes no sense to affect in any way the operation of the o.h.v. area. Thank you, John Ames

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2202

**Last Name** King

**First Name** D.

**Comment** Please choose another area for your proposed expansion. Johnson Valley OHV area is one last large open areas we have left for family oriented off-road use. To take this area away will devastate the off-road community in

terms of accessibility and force more people into smaller confined open riding areas. With out the open use OHV areas we will see more illegal riding in many areas near local cities and towns. There is so much desert land that is closed to the OHV community please consider using that land which sits unused for your training ground. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2203

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** By handing this area over to the United States Marine Corps, you are depriving the tax payers their due access to this public land area. The land area in question has had a tremendous impact on the national economy as the off-road market has continued to grow rapidly. The growth has been so extreme in the off-highway vehicle segment, that Ford even built their Raptor pickup truck to cater to this market. The tax revenue loss that would result from handing this area over to the USMC, would be enormous. This has been a key area in fostering interest in the extreme off-highway vehicle market segment and continues to be. One has to look no further than the rapidly increasing attendance of the annual King of the Hammers event. There are plenty of other desert areas that aren't presently being used, in either fashion, that the Marine Corps can use instead. Keep Johnson Valley OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational spending.

**Comment ID** 2204

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** My family and I have just started going to Johnson Valley with our Jeep and it has become a big part of our life. I oppose the expansion of the 29 Palms Base into the OHV area. Please reconsider another location.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2205

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am writing to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2206

**Last Name** minyard

**First Name** james

**Comment** GO EAST thears a lot of open unused desert out thear!!!!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2207

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please allow johnson valley off road area too remain a public use off road area,many familys use this privlige safely,

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training

requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2208

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** A little help: Please correct the mailing address posted here and extend the comment period to allow the public to send their letters to the proper destination.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2209

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** Mr. Proudfoot: The purpose of this letter is to make a formal request for and extension of time to provide comments to the aforementioned document. The rationale for this request is several-fold: 1. The DEIS and its appendix are a complex and lengthy document. Given the USMC has had nearly two years to compile this document and has only given the public 90 days to provide comment, it is our belief that it would be in the public interest to allow for additional time to provide such comment. 2. Only recently, we discovered that the Federal Register Notice of Availability of this Statement provides that the public comment period ended April 11, 2011. The said Notice is in conflict with Press-Release No: PR-110224NM1 as it provides

for the comment period ending May 26, 2011. Since indeed the Federal Register Notice is the only legal Notice of the USMC's intent of this document, the public is now confused and may have not submitted comments after this April due date. 3. The issue cited in number two, above, is now compounded by fact that the USMC has submitted to the Federal Register the following Notice: EIS No. 20110051, Draft EIS, USN, CA, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Project, Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale MAGTF Live-Fire and Maneuver Training Facility, San Bernardino County, CA, Comment Period Ends: 05/26/2011, Contact: Chris Proudfoot 760-830-3764. Revision of FR Notice Published 02/24/2011: Extending Comment Period from 04/11/2011 to 05/26/2011. Of particular concern to the undersigned is the provision of "Extending Comment Period". It is our assertion that the USMC has published this later Notice as a correction rather than an extension. Moreover, as of the writing of this letter, the USMC web site for the expansion does not include the Revision Notice, nor a press release, of the revised Notice published in the Federal Register on Friday, May 13, 2011. In light of the issues cited above, the undersigned request an extension of sixty (60) calendar days for the public to submit its comments to this document. Again, we believe this is in the public interest considering the gravity of the issues cited above and the implications of the project on public lands and related access to the same. Respectfully submitted: Harry Baker "Chairman: Partnership for Johnson Valley Jerry Grabow" President: District 37 American Motorcyclist Association Jim Woods "President: California Off-Road Vehicle Association ("CORVA") Mark Cave "President: California Association of Four Wheel Drive Clubs Ed Waldheim - President: California Trail Users Coalition Partnership for Johnson Valley <http://www.pfjv.org> A Division of California Trail Users Coalition <http://www.trailusers.org> 3550 Foothill Blvd. Glendale, CA. 91214

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2210

**Last Name** Auth

**First Name** William

**Comment** Please stop the government land grab from further eroding the taxpayers right to recreate. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2211

**Last Name** Earwood

**First Name** Reno

**Comment** Dear sirs, We have been enjoying Johnson Valley and surrounding area since 1966. We would go to a friend's homesteaded cabin and spend great weekends. Later my family got into offroading and still enjoy going to Johnson Valley to this day. Please don't take this land as many people love this great outdoors area. Thank you for your time.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2212

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Date: APRIL 25, 2011 Re: 29Palms Base expansion Draft Environmental Impact Statement Dear Sir: On Page 772 potential seismic hazards are listed among the issues raised in the public scoping comments. In the 900+ page document the only mentions we could find of anything seismic are: -The DEIS states there are two seismic detection stations in the west study area (Johnson Valley). -On Page 446 there is a mention of seismic processes in the formation of the topographic relief of an area. There is also a discussion of earthquake- related regulations as to buildings near fault zones and landslide areas. -On Page 448 3.12.3 the document discusses existing conditions on the Base. It states on Page 449 that the Mojave Desert is highly active seismically, and reports 50 named and unnamed faults within the current boundaries. It specifies,"in 1999, the magnitude 7.1 Hector Mine earthquake on the Lavic Lake Fault was centered in the northwest portion of the Combat Center. This earthquake caused a 24-mile long surface rupture with a maximum offset of 12 to 15 feet." -On Page 453 it says the Lenwood, Galway Lake, Lockhart, Johnson Valley, and Camp Rock-Emerson Faults cross the west study area (Johnson Valley) and in 1992, the magnitude 7.3 Landers earthquake centered on the Camp Rock-Emerson Fault caused ground rupture and surface displacement. -There is a map showing major fault lines in the west study area, Figure 3.12-1, Page 450. It depicts a thick cluster of parallel faults which include the Camp Rock-Emerson Fault, trending northeast to southwest across the entire western study area (Johnson Valley) through which there are plans to conduct live-fire air-ground training exercises of high intensity and extended duration. On Page 771 in a discussion of the eastern study area the DEIS states,"The effects of ordnance delivery would be limited to surficial and near-surface soils so the proposed action would not be expected to have an impact on topography or seismic conditions or hazards within the ROI or in the Twentynine Palms region." It is possible the"seismic conditions" in this paragraph means potential triggering of earthquake activity. But since the other references are to geology, building codes and landslide conditions, this is doubtful. But even if it does relate ordnance to earthquake, this seem to be the only instance in the entire DEIS that does. A color brochure distributed at the public meetings about the DEIS is titled"Facts about Noise from MCAGCC." Under 10 commonly asked questions about training noise is the question,"Can training noise cause earthquakes?" The answers,"No, seismic activity is unrelated to ordnance used in training." Period. No substantiation of the"fact" is supplied. But at least the brochure actually mentions training noise and earthquakes in the same sentence. The DEIS

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2213

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: 29Palms Base expansion Draft Environmental Impact Statement Since the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement means it requires a lot of time to study and assimilate; and since there are still stakeholders who are only now hearing of the expansion plans; and since there is confusion as to lack of correct information where to address public comments, calling into question the Marines' good-faith efforts to elicit those comments, it is requested that the public comment period for the Draft EIS be extended at least another 60 days. This comment concerns the Desert Tortoise The DEIS goes into great detail about special conservation measures now taken to help mitigate the loss of Desert Tortoises due to training and other activities on the Marine Air Ground Combat Center as it is today. The Bureau of Land Management website states:"The desert tortoise is listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species. Under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), anyone who takes (the term "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct) a tortoise is subject to civil and/or criminal penalties of up to a \$50,000 fine and one year in jail, or both. BLM assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the enforcement of the Act. The desert tortoise is also considered by California to be a threatened species with associated penalties." The DEIS says the training of Marine and other personnel regarding the legal status of the tortoise would include the definition of"take" and associated penalties. However, the DEIS does not detail what penalties, if any, the Marine Corps have been paying. A mine operator in Johnson Valley told us if he caused the death of a tortoise, he was subject to penalties of \$100,000. Each. The DEIS indicates that plans are to explode more than a million rounds of munitions ground-to-ground and more than 1.5 million rounds air-to-ground during the various exercises each year. As it also clearly states that this will significantly impact the Desert Tortoise, it must also make clear what

penalties will be paid, and who is to assess them. The BLM assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act. The desert tortoise is also considered by California to be a threatened species with associated penalties. The DEIS must make clear if these will still apply in the military expansion areas. The DEIS states that biologists authorized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service survey for tortoises before training and construction activities, and move the tortoises and eggs out of harm's way. The DEIS does not, however, state the survival rate of the tortoises who are relocated out of their established territories, whose burrows are dug up and whose eggs are moved, It also does not state the success rate of the current efforts by the Marines to protect the young tortoises unt

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species.

**Comment ID** 2214

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: 29Palms Base DEIS Dear Sir: Since the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement means it requires a lot of time to study and assimilate; and since there are still stakeholders who are only now hearing of the expansion plans; and since there is confusion as to lack of correct information where to address public comments, calling into question the Marines' good-faith efforts to elicit those comments, it is requested that the public comment period for the Draft EIS be extended at least another 60 days. Concerning the DEIS description of shared use of proposed expansion areas: -Marine Expeditionary Brigade Exercises: 2 per year for 24 days each. Only non-dud producing ordnance in southern portion of west study area. -Restricted public access to southern portion of west study area (except for two 984 x 984-foot [300 x 300- meter] Company Objective areas) permitted approximately 10 months/year. Three of the alternatives for expansion described in the DEIS include a Restricted Public Access Area (RPAA) to allow civilian recreational use to at least a remnant of the Johnson Valley Open Riding Area when military training activities are not being conducted. The document states that"elements of many public comments (e.g., restricted public access when MEB Exercises are not occurring) have been incorporated into some alternatives carried forward

for EIS analysis. Public comments influenced the development of the new Alternative 6. Similar to the Marine Corps' intent with Alternatives 4 and 5 (formulated before scoping), the development of Alternative 6 is consistent with the public's suggestion to: Allow for controlled periodic access for occasional public access and activities." It is difficult to believe that any member of the public who is used to free and open access to all of Johnson Valley actually used the words "controlled," or "restricted." "Periodic" might have been used to describe part-time access. "Restricted" also would have been understood to mean part-time access. A RPAA is defined in the draft document as an area in which certain public uses may be permitted, subject to restrictions, institutional controls, and mitigating methods designed to provide for public safety. Already restrictions are multiplying far beyond the assumptions of the public, whose righteous indignation at being shut out of a recreational area set aside by the BLM in 1980, might have been reduced with the idea of shared use. Being shut out of the area twice a year might seem reasonable, but: "Access to and use of the area by the general public would only be authorized when the land is not being utilized for training, and has been designated by the Commanding General as suitable for restricted activities to resume." "It is anticipated that the RPAA would be closed to the public twice yearly, for approximately 30 days each time. This would allow for required range preparation, execution of training, and range

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2215

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: DEIS on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The DEIS states: Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed. 3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative. The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources: Less than Significant Impacts (LSI): Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction. Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources. No Impacts (NI): No impact anticipated from airspace establishment. Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives. However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for

increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries. Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this. The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas. They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: 2216. Please see the response provided for that comment.

**Comment ID** 2216

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: DEIS on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The DEIS states: Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomic and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed. 3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative. The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources: Less than Significant Impacts (LSI): Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction. Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources. No Impacts (NI):

No impact anticipated from airspace establishment. Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives. However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries. Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this. The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas. They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

**Comment ID** 2217

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: DEIS on 29Palms Base expansion The Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) is attached. It totals toxic releases during the years 2007-2009, the latest report available. A"TRI release" is defined as the amount of on-site toxic chemical releases to air, water,

underground injection, landfills and other land disposal, and the amount transferred off-site for disposal. The top ten facilities with the most chemical releases in California included Marine Camp Pendleton at #10. . PBT Chemical releases are releases of Persistent, Bioaccumulative and Toxic Chemicals. Merriam-Webster defines "persistent" as "existing for a long or longer than usual time or continuously." It defines "bioaccumulation" as "the accumulation of a substance (such as a pesticide) in a living organism." It defines "toxic" as "poisonous." In other words, it means poisons that last a long time, and collect in the bodies of plants and animals and the animals that eat them. Of the top 10 California release sites, numbers 6-10 were military, one Army and four Marine, all in Southern California. The Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center 29 Palms is #7, with a little under half the PBT chemical releases that were measured at Camp Pendleton. Though the trend shown in the Inventory is generally downward for the state, if live fire combat training increases in intensity and duration on the scale the DEIS describes, MCAGCC will obviously rise on the list. Starting on Page 293, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement describes in detail the procedures used to comply with recording and reporting releases of TRI Chemicals. It addresses the Marines' methods for dealing with hazardous material spill abatement and cleanups, and contaminated soils. "Munitions Constituents" (MC) from unexploded ordnance and other munitions, and their breakdown elements, are described and mapped for current and historical ranges. Potential migration into humans and animals is addressed with somewhat limited studies. Perchlorate is described as an indicator munitions constituent as it is a good example of PBT (see definitions above). Perchlorate recently came to public notice again as a constituent of the drinking water in Barstow, CA. Databases on hazardous wastes from many sources and contaminated sites are described as not revealing any relevant sites. Formerly used defense sites are discussed. All are declared not relevant. On Page 293, one paragraph describes a total of 50 accidental releases, in 2002, of toxic substances and what was done about them. Deliberate releases and munitions constituents are not itemized. The discussion of toxic wastes ends on Page 301 of the DEIS. Nowhere is the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory mentioned, with its specific amounts, and the relative standing of military sites in general and MCAGCC in particular. Therefore the DEIS must be amended to show not only the methodology for reporting

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Munitions constituents and toxic chemical release reporting requirements are described in Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the EIS. As described in the EIS the Combat Center complies with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program, and all other federal, state, and local

requirements regarding hazardous materials and wastes, and would continue to do so under the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2218

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: DEIS on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The communities of Landers and Johnson Valley are in Postal Zip Code 92285. Landers borders the existing Marine Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms; Johnson Valley is directly southwest of it, and due south of the proposed westward expansion area. Environmental Justice provisions are addressed in the DEIS because Federal Projects are not supposed to have disproportionate impacts against any ethnic, demographic or socio-economic group. IN POSTAL CODE 92285, CENSUS 2010 HAS STATED: The population is 2,181. The median age of the population is 49.5. 24.7% are 65 years and over. This is almost twice the percentage of people 65 and older in the US population (12.4%). These are very much senior citizen communities. Many residents are retired and on fixed incomes. 39% of our population 16 and over is in the labor force, as compared to 69% in the US. Families below poverty level: 20.8% In the US: 12.4% Individuals below poverty level: 24.9% In the US: 12.4% Disability status (population 5 years and over): 34.8% In the US: 19.3% And for good measure: Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over): 25.1% In the US 12.7% (and we know many are proud Marines) [http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=92285&\\_cityTown=92285&\\_state=&\\_zip=92285&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=92285&_cityTown=92285&_state=&_zip=92285&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y) The factors listed above indicate the project does raise issues of Environmental Justice for the residents of Landers and Johnson Valley. The DEIS states that EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice say there must be one or more such affected populations within the DEIS area (Page 533). However, very few live WITHIN the EIS area, and it is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents outside the EIS area will not be impacted. The scoping issues (Item 4.3.1.3) listed on the same page include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. The contradiction is the DEIS states that the primary economic impacts would be from displacement of certain activities within the DEIS area causing financial and other hardships to surrounding areas. Therefore the DEIS must be revised to state the criteria for judging Environmental Justice are too narrow, and must state that these criteria also apply to populations outside the DEIS area. Anything less would be easily

misunderstood by a less-than-careful reader. Landers and Johnson Valley are within the impact area of the DEIS because of activities that are associated with current activities emanating from the Marine Base, and proposed activities due to the expansion, are above, around and adjacent to Landers and Johnson Valley. To assert otherwise is

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and low- income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. All environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice. As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

**Comment ID** 2219

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Re: DEIS on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The Executive Summary on Page 4 explains why the USMC is proposing the establishment of a large-scale training facility at MCAGCC 29Palms. It says the Marine Corps has a requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver training for a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB)-sized Air Ground Task Force, and the existing facilities are inadequate. The underlying strategy was designed over a decade ago. Times and technology have changed. It appears the very foundation for this strategy is changing. <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/2010/08/gates-time-has-come-to/> Posted by SWJ Editors on August 13, 2010 4:01 AM Gates Orders Marine Corps

Force Structure Review by Jim Garamone of American Forces Press Service. An excerpt follows: Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates has ordered a thorough force structure review of the Marine Corps to determine what an expeditionary force in readiness should look like in the 21st century. There are questions about the mission of the Marine Corps, Gates said. Before World War II, the Marines very successfully conducted "small wars" in the western hemisphere. The service also developed the rationale and logistics needed to conduct amphibious warfare. During World War II, the Corps was wholly dedicated to landing on the beaches in the South and Central Pacific. America's first offensive of World War II was when Marines landed on the beaches of Guadalcanal and began the campaign against Japan in August 1942. Tarawa, Saipan, Peleliu, Iwo Jima and Okinawa are just a few of the landings Marines made. Since then, Marines have fought on the beaches, mountains and trenches of Korea, the highlands and rice paddies of Vietnam, and the deserts of Kuwait, Iraq and Afghanistan. Although many of these operations saw Marines initially projected from the sea,"they soon turned into long, grinding, ground engagements," Gates said. The nation does not need a second land army, Gates said, but rather forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time. Also see Gates: Time has Come to Re-examine Future of Marine Corps by Kevin Baron of Stars and Stripes and Defense Chief Gates Orders Review of Marines' Role by David S. Cloud of The Los Angeles Times. A more recent article dated Mar. 2, 2011, says that Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, commanding general of Marine Corps Combat Development Command, spoke to news media about the 2010 Force Structure Review (formed to develop the organization, posture and capabilities of the Marine Corps and its role within the joint force in a fiscally-restrained post-Afghanistan environment; and I quote). Two of the recommendations from the Review are: A reduction in force structure from 202,000 to 186,800 when conditions in Afghanistan warrant, and Reduction in ground combat forces, to include a reduction in infantry (regimental headquarters from eight to seven; infantry bat

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2220
<b>Last Name</b>	Westbrook
<b>First Name</b>	John
<b>Comment</b>	I would like to comment on the acquisition that the marines want to take over the open desert east of Lucerne Valley. I know there are other alternatives to access land further east of their 29 Palms Base and also open land north and south. Why do you want to take the land that has been dedicated to off-road activities? It seems to me the usage of this land is far more destructive with tanks and warfare vehicles than the off-road vehicles could ever destroy. Besides the closeness to the town of Lucerne Valley and surrounding area of homes and developed land, and the noise and shakeing of the land would keep animals uneasy. This is a bad mistake on the governments ideas of exbanding the marine base. Please consider this letter of protest. Thank you for letting me express my opinion.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2221

**Last Name** Westbrook

**First Name** John

**Comment** Please consider my PROTEST to the proposal of the expansion of the marine base to the west into off-road territory. This land has been in use for that purpose for several years. The off-road vehicles could not destroy the land as bad as the tanks and vehicles used for war games could do. Please this PROTEST.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2222

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Dear Sirs, The land at Johnson Valley has been used by our family and friends for many years now. It would be a real shame to lose this area for four wheeling activities. No other area in Southern California is as good. We have been to many clean up runs there and the area looks better than it has in years. It would be a shame to destroy the work of what so many people accomplished. In this era of budget deficits why do we need to spend large sums of money on expansion of a military base? Is there any country in the world that we can't defeat right now? Thank You, Mike Sullivan

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2223

**Last Name** Westbrook

**First Name** Norma

**Comment** I would like to let you know of my opinion of the expansion of the marine base to the west. Please consider going to the east, north and south for this expansion. I'm not opposed to you needing to have more space to do your maneuvers, but there is plenty of open land to the north of State Hwy 40, that could be used and not come within the vicinity of any town. PLEASE CONSIDER THIS PROTEST. THANK YOU.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at

other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2224

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** "NOT FEASIBLE" is not sufficient response! Anywhere and everywhere a comment or concern is answered using this or a like ambiguous statement the DEIS must be re-written to clearly address exactly why that concern cannot/will not be mitigated in some way.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2225

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** The DEIS does not satisfactorily addressed how the dangerous problem of trespass will be handled and it does not explain why a fence between a live fire military range and a public recreation area will not be installed That was a real concern registered in numerous comments and the DEIS must be re-written to explain why there should be no fence.

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's

management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

**Comment ID** 2226

**Last Name** Hawkins

**First Name** Mike

**Comment** In mid December a group of family friends were out with two SUVs and a couple Quads on a well established dirt road near their cabin in Landers. The section of road they were on runs north and south in the south/east portion of Johnson Valley's open recreation area near the Marine Base. Just south of Emerson Dry Lake they were stopped by a "Conservation Officer" and everyone over 16 years old was cited. All six tickets were for trespassing onto the Base. They were on an unmarked (at the time) portion of the route that wanders slightly onto the edge of the Base for a short distance in order to skirt the foot of a mountain (see 34 degrees, 25 minutes, 30 seconds North and 116 degrees, 24 minutes west). Trespass on federal land is a class "B" misdemeanor with the first offence punishable by a fine of no more than \$5,000.00, six months in jail and 5 years probation. A class "B" misdemeanor is a petty crime for which it is mandatory to appear. The Defendant is entitled to a Lawyer if he so wishes and upon request will be tried by Judge rather than a Magistrate. But he is not entitled to be tried by a Jury of his Peers. And, it is a crime for which a conviction will become a matter of record. That's an especially important consideration for the young person thinking of pleading guilty. He/she will be dogged with a "Federal Offence" on their record the rest of their life when perhaps their great sin was simply riding down the road with Dad and Mom! Not exactly the sort of explanation most prospective employers would likely embrace. You know, many of us have long assumed that because the entire Border on that side of the Base is so poorly marked that there must be a bit of a buffer that allows for situations like this. This route has been used for 55 years that I know of, without the slightest indication that passing through there was a problem. But the law is the law and apparently there is no "LEGAL" requirement for the Marines to identify there border in any way at all. Still, the public is "LEGALLY" obliged to stay off the Base unless they have express permission to do otherwise. So if we're near the Base, it is fully our responsibility to know where we are with respect the boundary, no matter how illusive it might be. And, we should accept that! It's the law and it's the responsible thing to do! Even so, the Base could be more considerate on this matter. It's ironic that if you or I wish the public not traverse OUR land we must indicate where it is and what we want while the Base, which only exists because the public foot's the bill, won't pick up one of those \$80.00

hammers we bought them and install a sign before dishing out tickets of such a serious nature. If one considers how much time and money is spent on their public relations campaigns trying to tell everybody what good neighbors they are you'd think they'd realize that just a small sign in the right place could be a big help to that effort!

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision- making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Once a decision has been made, the Marine Corps would implement communication and notification procedures as outlined in the EIS, to maintain a steady and persistent engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and agencies during future management planning.

**Comment ID** 2227

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager, The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use. This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another. We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property. We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well. Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one. Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy

gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area. So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion. With Sincere Regards, Todd Sizelove 714-392-0985 hotrodtodd@pacbell.net 912 S. Lantana Avenue Brea, California 92821

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2228

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager, The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use. This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another. We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property. We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well. Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one. Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area. So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion. With Sincere Regards, Terry Sizelove 714-392-0980 tsize87@pacbell.net 912 S. Lantana Avenue Brea, California 92821

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and

has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

2229

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager, The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use. This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another. We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property. We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well. Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the

existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one. Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area. So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion. With Sincere Regards, Heather Johnson 714-262-8174 tranquillocutie@aol.com 12591 Whittier Avenue Brea, California 92821

**Date Comment Received** 5/25/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2230
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	Please see attached letter for my comments about the Johnson Valley Expansion. Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley, California.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/25/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2230**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Heather Johnson  
714-262-8174  
[tranquillocutie@aol.com](mailto:tranquillocutie@aol.com)  
12591 Whittier Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

**Response to Comment 2230:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2231

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please see attached letter for my comments about the Johnson Valley Expansion. Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley, California.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2231**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Terry Sizelove  
714-392-0980  
tsize87@pacbell.net  
912 S. Lantana Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

**Response to Comment 2231:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2232

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please see attached letter for my comments about the Johnson Valley Expansion. Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley, California.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2232**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Todd Sizelove  
714-392-0985  
hotrodtodd@pacbell.net  
912 S. Lantana Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

**Response to Comment 2232:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	2233
<b>Last Name First Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>Comment</b>	Please see attached letter for our comments about the Johnson Valley Expansion. Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley, California.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/26/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2233**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Jeff and Karin Sizelove  
714-671-0980  
ksizelove@pacbell.net  
912 S. Lantana Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

**Response to Comment 2233:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2234

**Last Name** Brady

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** Johnson Valley recreation area is one of the best local riding areas. I visit it often with my family and friends. I think it is wrong to extend the marine base into this area when there is little area to recreate as it is. Why not expand in a different direction? Is it because the environmentalists would be too hard to fight?

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for a project alternative. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2235

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not expand the 29 Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley, California. See my attached document showing why.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. No attachment document was found on the project website.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2236

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE 29 PALMS MARINE BASE INTO JOHNSON VALLEY. PLEASE SEE ATTACHED DOCUMENT STATING WHY I FEEL SO STRONGLY ABOUT THIS.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2236**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Hiram and Gloria Johnson  
760-364-3207  
[hglorancho1@juno.com](mailto:hglorancho1@juno.com)  
4574 Larrea Road  
Johnson Valley, CA 92285

**Response to Comment 2236:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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<b>Comment ID</b>	2237
<b>Last Name</b>	Name Withheld by Request
<b>First Name</b>	
<b>Comment</b>	PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE 29 PALMS MARINE BASE INTO JOHNSON VALLEY. PLEASE SEE ATTACHED LETTER SHOWING MY REASONS WHY.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/26/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2237**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

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We have gone out and used this area now called Johnson Valley OHV for the last forty plus years and want to continue to enjoy using it and going out there. We feel that the expansion of the Marine Base into Johnson Valley would seriously affect our enjoyment of this area along with the thousands of other OHV enthusiasts who use this area as well.

Expanding the base would seriously impact the businesses that rely on the off roaders who also use this area. We have seen first-hand how the area has changed since the closure of other off road areas which has caused the off roaders to be crammed into smaller areas impacting how the desert is used. This could only cause more issues that would make the existing areas even more crowded which would make a relatively safe family sport, a dangerous one.

Also, with the economic crisis that we here in California are experiencing, can we really afford to do this kind of project at all. The use of the area creates income for businesses from these off roaders who buy gas and groceries in the area before heading to the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Dr. Jeffrey and Mrs. Dianne Salo  
714-840-7700  
[djsalo@verizon.net](mailto:djsalo@verizon.net)  
19382 Pitcairn Lane  
Huntington Beach, CA 92646

**Response to Comment 2237:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2238

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND THE 29 PALMS MARINE BASE INTO JOHNSON VALLEY. PLEASE SEE ATTACHED LETTER SHOWING MY REASONS WHY WE ARE AGAINST THIS MOVE.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2238**

To the 29Palms EIS Project Manager,

The Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base expansion to the Southwest of Landers into Johnson Valley is a serious concern to our family as we use this area more often than any other off road area for our recreational use.

This is what we do as a family. It keeps us connected to one another.

We also have family that live in Johnson Valley and this would seriously impact their home and the peace and quiet of their home and property.

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So in closing, PLEASE DO NOT EXPAND the Twenty-Nine Palms Marine Base into Johnson Valley as it would severely impact not only the Off-roaders who use this OHV area, but also the community who prospers from their usage and the people who live in Johnson Valley. Johnson Valley has a much larger population than is widely known. Hundreds of families would be impacted by this expansion.

With Sincere Regards,

Jeff and Karin Sizelove  
714-671-0980  
ksizelove@pacbell.net  
912 S. Lantana Avenue  
Brea, California 92821

**Response to Comment 2238:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2239

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** The DEIS did not show the environmental impact of civilian aircraft having to negotiate additional restricted areas, the DEIS needs to be updated with information about how the additional travel time will effect the environment.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see Section 4.7 of the EIS for information on expected impacts to Airspace Management; Jet Routes are discussed in this section. Section 4.7 describes expected significant impacts on Jet Routes transitting within the proposed restricted area. The Marine Corps is working with the FAA to minimize these impacts through advanced planning and coordination efforts. The Marine Corps is sensitive to the potential effects the airspace proposals could have on all commercial and civil aviation activities. The airspace proposals will be reviewed by the FAA in an Aeronautical Study which will examine potential impacts on all airspace uses and those measures to be discussed with the Marine Corps, airport operators, and other aviation interests, to minimize any impacts. The Marine Corps will also continue its outreach to the civil aviation community to discuss those issues and concerns affecting their operations within the Combat Center airspace environment and those measures that can be taken to best accommodate all aviation interests.

**Comment ID** 2240

**Last Name** Dunn

**First Name** Sean

**Comment** To Whom it May Concern: I am Sean Dunn with DunnTech Motorsports in Redlands CA. I build and maintain off-road race cars of all sorts. The off-road races are my main source of advertising for my business. The business is my livelihood and the way I support my family. Off road racing is also my family's hobby and the way we spend all of our time. As race permits get denied and as public land is taken away, my business and family will be dramatically affected. It also forces all the racers into a very small area which has more impact on the land. All off-road racers are willing to do whatever it takes to keep our public lands open. I hope that the denial of permits and the land closure proposals will be seriously reconsidered. Sean Dunn

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2241

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I ask you to please choose an option that does not take the Johnson Valley Multi- Use area. With the inception of the San Bernardino County OHV Ordinance we off-road recreationalists have been told to ride in the JV Multi-Use area. The JVMUA has already seen a dramatic increase in use by locals that used to ride in other areas of the county, I have seen this increase first hand. My family has owned property in Landers for 37 years and bought it for the purpose of off- roading and did so in the surrounding area until the ordinance, I love the desert and exploring it on motorcycles and wanted to share that experience with my three sons and have all but lost the ability to so with my two youngest ones 11 and 6 with the exception of the vastness of the JVMUA. I am in full support of our great military, my 20 year old son is serving in the Navy on CVN65, his best friend is right now training at Camp Pendleton. I have two close friends in the Marines one of which served aboard MCAGCC 29 Palms for a time and is now back at Camp Pendleton, both have served in Iraq and Afghanistan. I understand the need for training but do please ask that another option besides taking JVMUA be found, I also am leery of the shared use plan as it seems problems could eventually cause that to be permanently taken. Thank You for your consideration

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2242

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** The DEIS did not show the impact of heavier class over 8,800 pounds GVW tow vehicles, towing large three axle trailers to attend racing events in Nevada or other areas. The DEIS needs to include the impact of towing race trucks because all alternatives other than NO action, or alternative 3 will end Off Road truck racing at Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2243

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** Noise studies only show the noise levels at existing boundaries, the DEIS needs to also include the noise levels at proposed boundaries including F 18 Hornets performing low level afterburner turns. Such as to escape and evade anti aircraft fire after weapons release.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2244

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** Comment period needs to be extended because of the complexity of the issues at hand, and the wrong address listed on the Federal Registry a long standing Official point of contact for these type of process, the 60 day extension requested by most organizations is more than reasonable.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively

reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2245

**Last Name** Simmons

**First Name** David

**Comment** I strongly ask that the Marine base take "no action" in their expansion or expand to the East of 29 Palms instead of taking portions of the Johnson Valley ORV area. The Johnson Valley ORV area has been used for decades by families and off-road enthusiasts as a wonderful recreational area. There are very few areas left in California for folks to do this --it would be an incredible loss for this to be taken over by the Base. Also, local businesses that support the ORV traffic will also be permanently affected. Please reconsider.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2246

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a

vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2247

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** California has a long history of having a difficult time meeting the air quality targets set by the EPA each year, because of this there is a very high probability any proposed alternative other than NO ACTION, will cause the State of California to fail and meet this mandate. Therefore the DEIS needs to include all the environmental damage including erosion, loss of the State of California's share of Federal Highway funds will cause due to lack of maintenance.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The proposed training exercises would increase emissions of GHGs, as presented in Section 5.4.8 of the EIS. However, the efforts by the Marine Corps and DoN to implement broad-based programs to reduce energy consumption and use renewable and alternative fuels would somewhat offset these emission increases.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2248

**Last Name** Dunn

**First Name** Laura

**Comment** To Whom it May Concern: I am Laura Dunn with DunnTech Motorsports in Redlands CA, my husband's business. We build and maintain off-road race cars of all sorts. The off-road races are our main source of advertising for the business. The business is our livelihood and the way we support our family. Off road racing is also our family's hobby and the way we spend all of our time. As race permits get denied and as public land is taken away, our business and family will be dramatically affected. It also forces all the racers into a very small area which has more impact on the land. All off-road racers are willing to do whatever it takes to keep our public lands open. I hope that the denial of permits and the land closure proposals will be seriously reconsidered.  
Laura Dunn

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed

action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2249

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** The DEIS dose not show substitutive need, lacks any real reason why the goals can not be meet within existing boundaries, just saying safety of the participants at the same time compromising the non participating publics safety is not acceptable. In-listed people assume a risk when they in-list, just like pilots assume a risk when they fly light aircraft, the pilots creed is you don't crash land on an occupied smooth field because the empty one was rocky. As an Aviator I always respected in-listed people and thought they shared the same train of thought.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 2250

**Last Name** Tammone

**First Name** Thomas

**Comment** As a mechanic my challenge has been to build a machine to fit the environment, all proposed alternatives other than alternative 3 or NO ACTION, will now force us to ask surrounding land managers to rebuild their environments to suite displaced vehicles. The DEIS needs to include the damage to the environment, displaced vehicles will cause as their use in

surrounding environments such as the San Bernardino National Forest, as this environment changes to suit displaced rock buggies from Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2251

**Last Name** Lough

**First Name** Doug

**Comment** If in fact the base expansion is approved, what is the time line for cutting of the off-road usage of the area? Will the off-roaders going to be compensated by expanding into other areas so as not to concentrate the off-roading to smaller, and more dangerous, proximity to others? What are the chances of a shared area to allow the base expansions buffer zone to still be used in an off-road capacity?

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. A timeline for the proposed action has yet to be determined. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. Once a decision has been made, the Marine Corps would implement communication and notification procedures as outlined in the EIS, to maintain a steady and persistent engagement with local communities, stakeholders, and agencies during future management planning.

**Comment ID** 2252

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please go east this is all we have left from what has been a government land take over of all the areas I love to explore and it is already tough to live with the ever increasing sound levels that the base is putting on us . I live within site if little bagdad and see why we need to get our soldiers ready for combat but please go east and let us keep Our valley if you move west it will change our lives for ever and destroy what little the local merchants have to keep them above water.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2253

**Last Name** Wood

**First Name** Mary

**Comment** I oppose the closure of the Johnson Valley OHV area as well as the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine Base. The base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn. The Johnson Valley OHV area is a vital and critical component of off-road usage and recreation. The South Western states of the USA derive significant economic benefit from off-road usage, both enthusiast and racing. Many industries rely partially or

exclusively on the recreational and professional use of lands in the Johnson Valley OHV area. The Johnson Valley OHV area is also a vital recreational center for a great number of families. It allows parents and children to spend time together in the outdoors. This is public land and should always remain public land. The Marine Corps have failed to justify their need for simultaneous training of 3 Marine Expeditionary Brigades.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces.

**Comment ID** 2254

**Last Name** Taylor

**First Name** Duane

**Comment** Please see attached Pdf document. Thank You.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2254 (Page 1 of 2)



May 26, 2011

Project Manager  
Proposed 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Project  
MAGTFTC, MCAGCC  
Bldg. 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

To Whom It May Concern,

As representatives of national motorized recreation organizations we write to support the "no action" alternative in the *Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training*. We recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action "...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need..." However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation.

Each of the undersigned organizations works closely with local partners including affiliates, clubs, associations and individual riders. Our local partners, the people who live, work and recreate in the area, are concerned that any of the proposed alternatives, other than the no-action alternative, will lead to substantially reduced or eliminated access and opportunities.

We also join our local partners in being concerned that the proposed expansion will have a negative economic impact on the areas surrounding the lost riding opportunities. As noted in table 3.3-7 in the DEIS, a 2007 Case Study of California's Mojave Desert found that "Tourism generates an estimated income of around \$8 million per year in Twentynine Palms (2/3 of which is related to recreation and does not include equipment purchases). Recreationist trip expenditures and OHV equipment-related expenditures throughout the Mojave Desert region in 2003 totaled \$338.8 million in 'earnings'." Clearly recreation, and off-highway vehicle (OHV) recreation in particular, is playing an important role in the local economy. We believe that this source of revenue generation will be lost, and will not be replaced, by the implementation of any of the alternatives other than "no-action."

Lastly, we share concerns with many that the DEIS is inadequate to meet National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) standards and simply does not examine an adequate range of alternatives, including some that would allow for appropriate OHV recreation to continue in the area. As a result, we encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of OHVs, and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

• 1152 15<sup>th</sup> Street NW • Suite 800 • Washington, DC 20005 • PH: (202) 336-5116 •

Response to Comment 2254 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

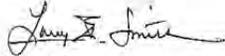
The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2254 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 2254 (Page 2 of 2):

Sincerely,



Larry Smith  
Executive Director  
Americans for Responsible Recreational  
Access



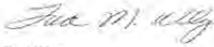
Greg Mumm  
Executive Director  
BlueRibbon Coalition



Duane Taylor  
Director, Federal Affairs  
Motorcycle Industry Council



Russ Ehnes  
Executive Director  
National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation  
Council



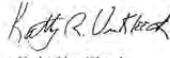
Fred Wiley  
Executive Director  
Off-Road Business Association



Paul Vitano  
Executive Vice President  
Recreational Off-Highway Vehicle Association



Stuart D. Gosswein  
Sr. Director  
Federal Government Affairs  
Specialty Equipment Market Association



Kathy Van Kleeck  
Senior Vice President  
Government Relations  
Specialty Vehicle Institute of America

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2255

**Last Name** picker

**First Name** joe

**Comment** please do not close johnson valley. this my recreation area for me ,my kids and the all family. what else we going to do, watch tv with kids? that wont be very bonding experience. joe picker

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2256

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take this land. This is where I spend time with my family.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2257

**Last Name** Parks

**First Name** Brent

**Comment** The Base is big enough. Do not STEAL land from the general public! Any land taken for the base should be replaced, acre for acre, from the Bighorn Mountain area just south of the JV OHV area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2258

**Last Name** Barstow

**First Name** Tim

**Comment** I would like to thank you all for your service, but I do believe that the land grab that your are trying to execute on Johnson Valley is unwarranted and unneeded. With all of the extremely large landholdings for the military in Southern California and Nevada, I believe that there currently exists more than enough land for the military to train without further acquisitions.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

**Comment ID** 2259

**Last Name** Wikle

**First Name** James

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2260

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** While I support our military,I would like to see the expansion to go East - NOT into Johnson Valley Rec area. I live in Yucca Valley, and enjoy off-roading, and have been in the area for over 20 years. Beyond my personal desire to keep the area open, I am concerned with the economic impact that losing that area would have on our local businesses. Events held in that area bring much needed dollars to our local economy as thousands of people pass through here to get out to the Recreation Area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2261

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support our military, but, I think Johnson Valley should be left as it is. Thanks for your consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2262

**Last Name** VANCE

**First Name** PERRY

**Comment** I fully support our military, but, I think Johnson Valley should be left as it is now.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2263

**Last Name** VANCE

**First Name** PERRY

**Comment** I fully support our military, but, I think Johnson Valley should be left as it is now.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2264

**Last Name** VANCE

**First Name** PERRY

**Comment** I fully support our military, but, I think Johnson Valley should be left as it is now.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2265

**Last Name** Lara

**First Name** Jim

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2266

**Last Name** Leighton

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Sincerely, Robert H Leighton II

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2267

**Last Name** Salvador

**First Name** Joe

**Comment** JV is one of the fewest place left for the offroad community. Southern California depends on JV to be kept open as an OHV area. JV is the Mecca for offroaders especially for us Rock Crawlers. I would like my kids to be able to use this land and hope that when they grow up to be adults and parents, they too will have the oppurtunity to use the land of JV for OHV use.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current

recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2268

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Dana

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2269

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Any westward expansion would negatively impact the Johnson Valley OHV area as well as the local economy as many small businesses rely upon the income brought in by the recreational use of Johnson valley. In addition, the local economy shows their largest profits on weekends that have off-road races in the Johnson Valley OHV area. Races such as the MORE 500 and King of the Hammers bring thousands of competitors, spectators and vendors to this area. We respectfully ask that the Marines expand the base to the East per option 3. I honor the courage and sacrifice made by the US military to protect the freedoms our country enjoys and hope the Marines and off-road community can come to a mutually beneficial outcome. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2270

**Last Name** Wukelich

**First Name** Keith

**Comment** I am very disappointed that the draft still includes shutting down some of the best four-wheeling in the country. I fully support the need of our fighting men and women to have amply room to train, however shift the area over to leave out these premier trails. This unfortunate situation smacks of the environmental land closure attitude that has been spreading across the US for the past 8 years. Please prove us wrong by moving the boundries and making all parties happy.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2271

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I currently support alternative A. The Marine Corps has not adequately assessed its ability to use existing military resources, such as Fort Irwin, to conduct its training exercises. Additionally, the Marine Corps' recommended alternative does not address the acquisition/opening of new OHV areas to mitigate the loss of land in Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008.

Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2272

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2273

**Last Name** McCafferty

**First Name** David

**Comment** I have enjoyed the openness of Johnson Valley and the ability to get away and ride in a open area, one of the few still left in California. If this land is taken by the Marine's it will be lost forever even if the politics of the world change, because of the use of active explosives the land will never be open to the public again due to these dangers. The military already has huge amounts of the California desert China Lake, Ft Irwin, 29 Palms, Edwards they should be able to work with the land they have and leave the only open area to the people of Southern California. Thank you, Dave McCafferty

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2274

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This land is your land this land is my land. We need to keep this land open to everyone.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

**Comment ID** 2275

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Removing the Johnson Valley OHV area from public access will turn many Southern California outdoor enthusiasts like me from pro military supporters into neutral to anti military voters. I email my congresswoman Mary Bono every year on issues I care about and monitor her voting record on those issues. I use that area numerous times per year for hiking, riding motorcycles, and hunting. The loss of that area from public domain WILL make me an opponent of the 29 Palms Marine Base.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2276

**Last Name** Steele

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission(as I served and trained there myself), there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2277
<b>Last Name</b>	Waiwood
<b>First Name</b>	Rob
<b>Comment</b>	Please review and consider the attached comments.
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/26/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2277 (Page 1 of 4)

Response to Comment 2277 (Page 1 of 4):

LU-1:

Thank you for your comment. Text in Section 3.1, *Land Use* has been modified as suggested.



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
California Desert District  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA 92553  
<http://www.blm.gov/ca/cdd>

In Reply Refer To:  
2400  
3890  
(CA-610,39)

May 26, 2011

Subject: Comments on Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment draft environmental impact statement (DEIS).

Please consider the following comments in formulating final impact assessments for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment environmental impact statement.

Specific Comment

Page 3.1-15, first para. The statement: BLM has assigned a Known Sodium Leasing Area (43 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 2400) land classification to lands in the east study area in the vicinity of these two mines. This classification indicates that the area is chiefly valuable for sodium. This designation is different from a land classification such as "chiefly valuable". Chiefly valuable has two connotations at Bristol, a comparative value between comingled minerals pursuant to the Saline Placer Act of 1901 and comparative values between leasable mineral lands and agricultural lands under the Leasing Act of 1920. The area was not classified as "chiefly valuable" under either authority. Re-write: *BLM has designated a portion of Bristol Dry Lake as a Known Sodium Leasing Area (KLA). A KLA is an area known to contain valuable deposits of leasable minerals (43 CFR 3500). It is that area in which there is direct geologic evidence that the deposit is known or believed to exist in sufficient quantity and of such quality to establish that the deposit is workable and that prospecting is not required to determine these factors.*

LU-1

Comment ID: 2277 (Page 2 of 4)

Page 2

Chapter 4 General (All alternatives)

While not required of Engle Act withdrawals, the intent of the Congress with respect to Federal Land Policy and Management Act public land withdrawals is clear: "A report prepared by a qualified mining engineer, engineering geologist, or geologist which shall include but not be limited to information on: general geology, known mineral deposits, past and present mineral production, mining claims, mineral leases, **evaluation of future mineral potential, present and potential market demands**". While a report is not required for this action, I don't believe the Congress intended mineral resources to be considered in any lesser degree than their stated intent in other Organic Act directives. The NEPA requires a hard look at the "potential for occurrence and accumulation" of mineral resources in the EIS analysis to fully disclose the impacts resulting from a loss of access to and development of these resources from the proposed action and alternatives. The BLM has spent considerable time and money developing a Geology-Energy-Minerals assessment of the California Desert to be used in significant decision making processes such as this action. For example, the statement on page 4.12-6 of the DEIS: "Potential loss of access to inactive mines and unworked mining claims would not represent a substantial reduction in the overall availability or supply of iron, gold, and copper, so there would be no indirect impacts to mineral resources due to purchase of claims that are unworked or are associated with inactive mines" is emblematic of the approach of assessing impacts associated with a lack of interest in a property. The initiative of a property owner may be a consideration in the impact analysis; however, and overall, the assessment weighs resource values lost as a result of an action. Perhaps you should avail yourselves of BLM's assessment information in your analyses. To simply assess impacts by analyzing a lack of interest or activity is inconsistent with National Environmental Policy act assessments and considerations of resource values (see enclosed map).

GEO-1

The DEIS discounts the local and regional importance of mining commodities other than mineral materials. For example, calcium chloride production in California only represents 10 to 12 percent of all United States production; the operations at Bristol dry lake together with Cadiz dry lake do represent all of natural western US production. From a regional perspective, this is important both to the local and regional socio-economic infrastructures (i.e., "The world's continental sources of sodium chloride are almost limitless"; page 4.12-12). Local mining and associated industries still produce local jobs, taxes, and purchases. There is the same consideration with iron ore. Iron ore resources in California are not significant in comparison with worldwide or US resources; however, access to and availability of these local deposits are important to local cement producers.

SOC-1

Response to Comment 2277 (Page 2 of 4):

GEO-1 & SOC-1:

Section 4.12, *Geological Resources* and Section 4.3, *Socioeconomics and Environmental Justice* have been updated to further evaluate local and regional impacts with respect to mining claims, mineral resources, and other commodities.

**Comment ID: 2277 (Page 3 of 4)**

The EIS should develop as alternatives definitive decisions on acquisition of mineral property. The "case-by-case" assumptions of the DEIS do not allow for any assessment of access to or development of mineral resources as a part of the scope of the proposed action or alternatives. I recommend at least a statement that all mineral properties in Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) training locations be acquired. Not knowing whether a property having mineral resource potential will be acquired creates an unnecessary economic burden on the owners through the uncertainty as to whether their investments will be "allowed" or not.

NEPA-1

Thanks for the consideration.

Rob Waiwood  
Mineral Examiner  
California Desert District  
Bureau of Land Management  
22835 Calle San Juan De Los Lagos  
Moreno Valley, CA 92553  
(951-697-5306)  
FAX: (951-697-5299)  
Email: robert\_waiwood@blm.gov

Enclosure:

Mineral Potential Map

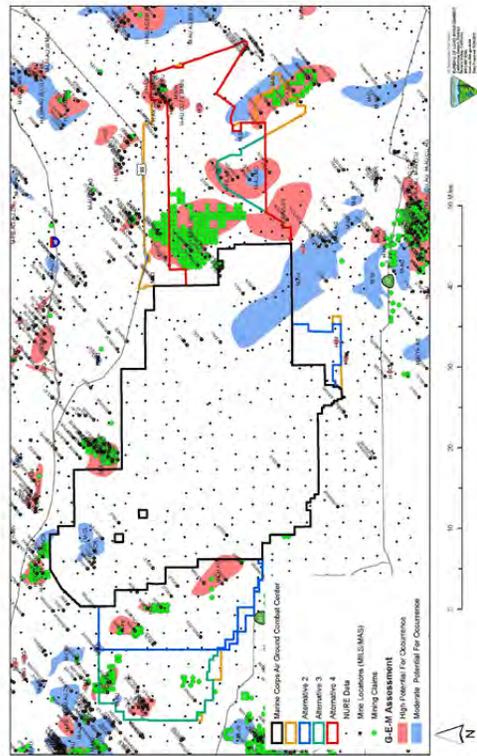
**Response to Comment 2277 (Page 3 of 4):**

**NEPA-1:**

Thank you for your comment. As noted in the EIS, access to mining and other land holdings will be determined on a case-by-case basis once an action alternative is selected (see Section 2.6 of the EIS for more information).

Comment ID: 2277 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment 2277 (Page 4 of 4):



**Comment ID** 2278

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** LOVE you guys....BUT you are going the wrong direction. Go EAST. You are going to kill so many business and jobs.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2279

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Unless you provide substantially similar Off Highway Vehicle opportunity in the approximate same area at the time of closure, the OHV users will be invading the more limited OHV areas of the San Bernardino National Forest nearby. THERE HAS BEEN NO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY DONE ON THE EFFECTS OF IMPACT TO THE San Bernardino National Forest of the Johnson Valley OHV park closure. Any knowledgeable person on this subject would likely agree this should be done. The results would show certain already stressed OHV routes in the SBNF would be greatly impacted by the many thousands of Johnson Valley OHV users flooding into parts of the SBNF. The study would likely conclude that due to the high impact on the SBNF the Johnson Valley OHV park must remain open; at least until a similar OHV facility in the area is open. To not do so will undoubtedly cause a extremely adverse environmental impact on the limited existing OHV routes in the SBNF.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would

fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

**Comment ID** 2280

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am pro military. But this is outrageous. Taking our land for something than can be accomplished in other areas with much less impact to people, jobs, livelihoods, businesses. This is truly an environmental injustice.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2281

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** This will destroy our community.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2282

**Last Name** Pessa

**First Name** Ray

**Comment** Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager Alternative #7 In speaking with a colleague recently I realized that all entities wishing to use public land in Johnson Valley requires a special use permit from the BLM such as the King of the Hammers event, Mojave Desert Racing program or the Sheriff Search and Rescue fundraiser etc. I propose alternative #7 as an option for 29 palms training land/airspace project to achieve the necessary training a Marine Expeditionary Brigade. The Base liaison has stated that a two month period per year is what is necessary to achieve the required training. Determine which two months are preferable, apply and receive special use permit from the BLM for that period and close the entire Johnson Valley Open area of public land for that time frame. Enough notification to the public would eliminate the need to fence any area of base which will be necessary in the event of a permanent expansion into Johnson Valley. Create the needed MOA restrictions over the area as needed for close air support operations for that time frame. I believe this alternative would meet most of the public concerns regarding the use of the public land. It will be necessary to identify the method in which ordinance clean-up will ensure public use after a MEB exercise. Certainly not all, but I offer this for your consideration and eagerly await your response.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM’s management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2283

**Last Name** Shaffer

**First Name** Jeff

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-

highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2284

**Last Name** Martinez

**First Name** Samuel

**Comment** Attached is the comment letter from LAFCO. Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2284 (Page 1 of 9)



**LOCAL AGENCY FORMATION COMMISSION**

215 North "D" Street, Suite 204 • San Bernardino, CA 92415-0490  
(909) 383-9900 • Fax (909) 383-9901  
E-mail: [lafco@lafco.sbcounty.gov](mailto:lafco@lafco.sbcounty.gov) • [www.sbclafco.org](http://www.sbclafco.org)

Established by the State of California to serve the Citizens, Cities, Special Districts and the County of San Bernardino

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Clerk to the Commission  
ANGELA M. SCHELL  
Deputy Clerk to the Commission  
REBECCA LOWERY  
Deputy Clerk to the Commission

**LEGAL COUNSEL**  
CLARK H. ALSOP

Sent Via mail and email at [SMBPLMSWEBPAO@usmc.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@usmc.mil)

May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training

To Whom It May Concern:

The Local Agency Formation Commission for San Bernardino County (LAFCO) received the abovementioned notice and would like to provide comments regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) prepared for the proposed expansion for the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC).

In San Bernardino County, there are a number of agencies that provide a variety of services within the areas identified in the alternative study areas. The proposed base expansion will affect some of these agencies/districts and their ability to serve within these areas identified in the study. Although, most of these agencies/districts were identified in the DEIS, some were not (i.e. Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District, County Service Area 29, etc.). Depending on the alternative pursued by the Marine Corps, some of these agencies/districts may or may not be affected by this proposal.

The following are the agencies/districts that may be affected by the proposed expansion including the services they currently provide (or are authorized to provide):

Response to Comment 2284 (Page 1 of 9):

Thank you for your comment. The information provided has been reviewed and added to the EIS as appropriate.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

As indicated in Section 2.8 of the EIS, the Combat Center would complete and implement the Installation Energy and Sustainability Strategy (IESS) that balances water demands (including those associated with the proposed action) with water supplies by increasing water conservation, using more recycled water, importing water, treating lower quality groundwater, and/or other methods deemed appropriate. The strategy would address sustainable water usage within the Combat Center, as well as regional water management, particularly if the strategy included groundwater extraction from other than the Surprise Spring aquifer.

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Draft EIS  
Proposed Expansion for the MCAGCC  
Page 2 of 5

- Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District (MDRCD) - see Attachment #1 map  

The MDRCD is a district that provides resources conservation within its jurisdiction. It currently provides services such as runoff control, soil erosion prevention, improvement of land capabilities, and habitat preservation. The district collaborates with a number of State and Federal agencies in their conservation programs. It should be noted that the MDRCD overlays the entirety of the base as it currently exists.
- San Bernardino County Fire Protection District (SBCFPD) - see Attachment #2 map  

The SBCFPD, which encompasses the area of San Bernardino County that is not within an independent fire provider's jurisdiction, is authorized to provide the following services related to fire protection: structural, watershed, prevention, inspection, suppression, weed abatement, hazardous materials services, rescue, first aid, paramedic, ambulance transportation, emergency response, and disaster preparedness planning. Both the SBCFPD South Desert and the SBCFPD North Desert Service Zones may be affected by this proposal, including the SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley – east of the City of Twentynine Palms), which is a special taxing entity within the South Desert Service Zone. It should also be noted that the SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone overlays the entirety of the base as it currently exists.
- Mojave Water Agency (MWA) – see Attachment #3 map  

The MWA is a special act water agency that provides wholesale water within its boundaries (water from the State Water Project). In cooperation with other water entities, MWA is also responsible for managing the water resources within its boundaries to ensure a sustainable supply of water for the benefit of its constituents. In addition, MWA is also the court-appointed Watermaster for the Mojave River Basin adjudication. It should also be noted that the lower portion of the West Study Area is within MWA's Improvement District M, which was formed to fund the pipeline to recharge the basins located in the Yucca Valley region.
- County Service Area 29 (CSA 29) – see Attachment #4 map  

CSA 29 is a county service area that provide cemetery, TV translator, park and recreation, street lighting and water services within its boundaries, which is generally identified as the Lucerne Valley area. The district is also authorized to provide sewer service and has the ability to provide such service in the future, if needed.
- Bighorn Desert View Water Agency (BDVWA) - see also Attachment #4 map  

BDVWA provides domestic and retail water service within the communities of Johnson Valley, Flamingo Heights, and Landers. The district is developing plans in conjunction with MWA for recharge of water to the groundwater basin.

**Response to Comment 2284 (Page 2 of 9):**

Section 5.4.13.3 of the EIS states that “while acquisition of the Cadiz Inc. land may be beneficial for the water supply on the Combat Center, it would have a regionally significant impact because it would inhibit Cadiz from instituting their Conservation and Storage Project.”

The EIS has been updated to reflect the change from Yucca Valley Fire Protection District to the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District. The Final EIS has been modified as appropriate.

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Response to Comment 2284 (Page 3 of 9):

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- County Service Area 70 Improvement Zone M (Wonder Valley) see also Attachment #4 map

CSA 70 M is a county service area zone that provides park and recreation services within its current boundaries through imposition of special taxes.

Below is a table that identifies the different areas (East, South, and West Study Areas) and a range of reasonable alternatives that were evaluated in the DEIS. Depending on the alternative use, the matrix below identifies the agencies/districts that may potentially be affected.

	East Study Area	South Study Area	West Study Area
Alternative 1	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>BDVWA</li> <li>CSA 29</li> </ul>
Alternative 2	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>BDVWA</li> </ul>
Alternative 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>MDRCD</li> <li>SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	None

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Alternative 4	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<p><i>Limitations may exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Alternative 5	None	None	<p><i>Limitations may exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Alternative 6 (Preferred Alternative)	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• MWA</li> </ul> <p><i>Limitations may also exist within the Restricted Area</i></p>
Aggregate Land Study Areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD Service Zone FP-4 (Wonder Valley)</li> <li>• CSA 70 M (Wonder Valley)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MDRCD</li> <li>• SBCFPD South Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• SBCFPD North Desert Service Zone</li> <li>• MWA and its Imp. District M</li> <li>• BDVWA</li> <li>• CSA 29</li> </ul>

Chapter 4 of the DEIS identifies a potential effect on the instrument approaches for the Big Bear Airport. The airport is operated by the Big Bear Airport District. Mitigation or measures to counter the potential effect are not identified in the DEIS. Mitigation should be identified in the document.

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Chapter 5 of the DEIS identifies that for Alternative 1 the cumulative impact of the Twentynine Palms Water District groundwater pumping increase in the Twentynine Palms Valley Basin, combined with an increase in Combat Center production from Alternative 1 in the same groundwater basin, could result in declines in hydraulic head that would eventually decrease the amount of natural groundwater discharge from the basin. The DEIS goes on to state that this would be potentially significant in the absence of a long-term plan for managing the potable water supply to the region. Information as to plans for a long-term plan for potable water supply needs to be included in the DEIS.

Chapter 5 of the DEIS also identifies that Alternative 3 would eliminate or curtail the agricultural operation of Cadiz Inc. and the Cadiz Inc. access to portion of its existing water supply system. The DEIS further states that Alternative 3 would interfere with or preclude the Cadiz Water Conservation and Storage Project, a potential water supply for southern California, because the alternative would overlap with the proposed footprint of the Cadiz Water Conservation and Storage Project. Alternative 3 would have an impact to the region and the DEIS should identify that Alternative 3 could significantly curtail water storage for the region.

It should be noted that through the County Fire reorganization, the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District, which was identified several times in the DEIS, was reorganized and is now known as the San Bernardino County Fire Protection District and its South Desert Service Zone. This change needs to be identified in the DEIS and the emergency response information related to the Yucca Valley Fire Protection District must be modified to address the South Desert Service Zone.

If you have any questions concerning the information outlined above or need additional information regarding the LAFCO process, please do not hesitate to contact me at (909) 383-9900. Please maintain LAFCO on your distribution list to receive further information related to this process.

Sincerely,



KATHLEEN ROLLINGS-McDONALD  
Executive Officer

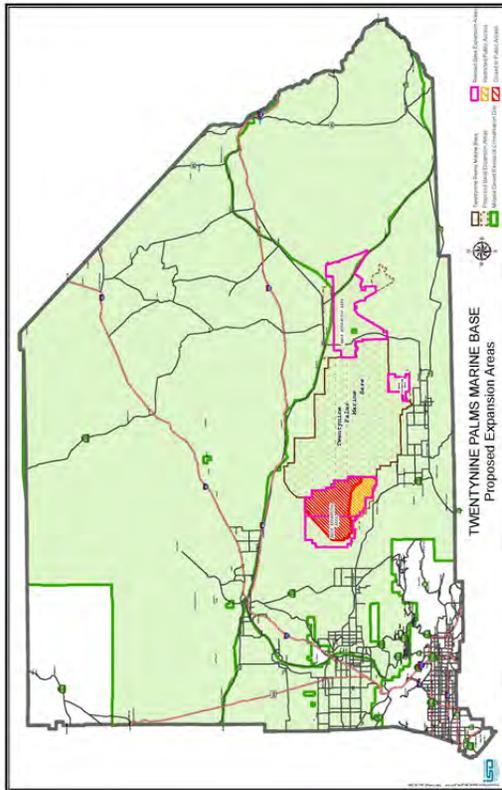
Attachment:

1. Mojave Desert Resource Conservation District Map
2. San Bernardino County Fire Protection District Map
3. Mojave Water Agency Map
4. All Others Maps

cc: Brad Mitzelfelt, LAFCO Chairman and 1<sup>st</sup> District Supervisor, San Bernardino County

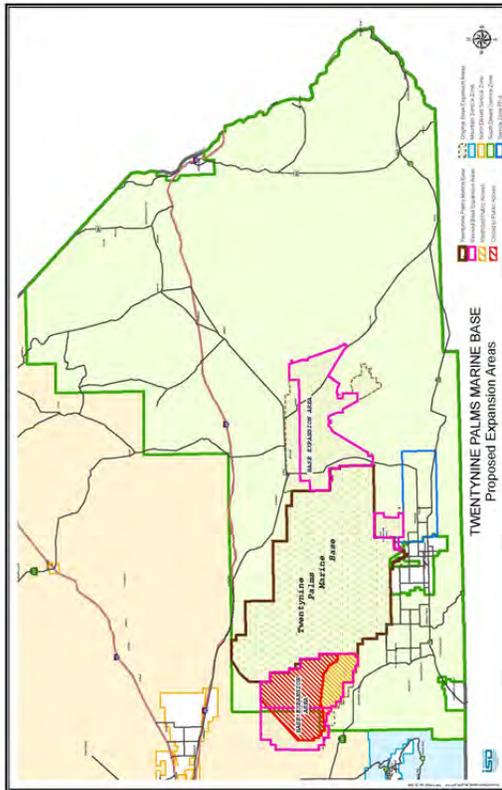
Comment ID: 2284 (Page 6 of 9)

Response to Comment 2284 (Page 6 of 9):



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Response to Comment 2284 (Page 7 of 9):







**Comment ID** 2285

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Let me start of by saying this....My father is a Marine, my grand father is a Marine and my cousin is a Marine. I to did my duty and server my country, but not as a Marine. I definately believe in service and country. That being said, the loss of the Johnson Valley OHV and adjacent lands would be devistating to California. There are tens of thousands of residents that pack-up the truck, trailer, camper, RV, family and "toys", heading to Johnson Valley. This generates millions in revinue both near Johnson Valley and the local markets where these families come from. This area is special to myself and 4x4 club that I go "wheeling" with. Please find a solution that does not close or restrict usage of Johnson Valley for the use of the public.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2286

**Last Name** Scott

**First Name** Michael

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is

not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Mike Scott

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2287

**Last Name** Hall

**First Name** Jamie

**Comment** See attachment below.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2287 (Page 1 of 6)



California Desert Coalition  
P. O. Box 1508  
Yucca Valley, CA 92286

California Desert Coalition  
[www.CaDesertCo.org](http://www.CaDesertCo.org)

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**RE: 29 Palms US MCAGCC Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study; Scoping Comments for the draft EIS; delivered via electronic public comment form**

The California Desert Coalition (CDC) is pleased to provide scoping comments on the proposed Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study.

The CDC is a citizens' advocacy group formed in 2007 to oppose the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power's (LADWP's) preferred alignment for its Green Path North transmission line project. Although the LADWP withdrew their application for the project from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in March 2010, CDC, on behalf of the public continues to participate in the monitoring of projects and issues that affect the unique and treasured quality of life in the California Desert.

We are a non-partisan, non-profit issue advocacy group that was organized to provide new and refreshing viewpoints toward our environment, our place in it, and our responsibility to it. Therefore, we feel it necessary to provide comments on the proposed expansion study.

**Scoping Comments:**

The Department of Defense has proposed a major expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Base into the Johnson Valley OHV recreation area. It is understood that the Marine Corps Air Ground and Combat Center (MCAGCC) is the only military base location that will provide sufficient land and airspace potential to meet the training requirements for a large scale Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). The preferred alternative (#6) states 44% of the recreational lands in Johnson Valley will be available 10 months out the year.

We strongly urge a "no action" alternative; despite its lack of presence as a legitimate alternative in the current draft EIS. The environmental impacts that will result from loss of open space within Johnson Valley OHV area will be significant should the preferred alternative be chosen.

We also request that the suggested permit procedure that was mentioned in public meetings be available for public examination.

REC-1  
NEPA-1

Response to Comment 2287 (Page 1 of 6):

**REC-1:**

Thank you for your comment. Comment noted.

**NEPA-1:**

The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

**AQ-1:**

Regarding the potential for the proposed expansion of the Combat Center into the Johnson Valley OHV recreational area to lead to an increase in illegal ORV incursions onto private property and the associated fugitive dust impacts from these activities: It is difficult to predict how and where OHVs would be displaced as a result of the project alternatives that would expand into Johnson Valley. These vehicles could increase fugitive dust emissions on private lands compared to existing conditions. However, these vehicles would operate intermittently and at a level much lower in any one location than the scenario of equipment usage evaluated in the DEIS for ambient PM10 impacts. The DEIS analysis determined that maximum PM10 impacts on public lands would produce less than significant air quality impacts. Therefore, it is expected that impacts of fugitive dust from illegal ORV incursions onto private property also would produce less than significant PM10 impacts.

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Comments to specific resource categories:

1. Air Quality

The preferred alternative will inevitably create increased dust in the surrounding rural communities from the displaced OHV activity. It will also create a chemical pollution in the airspace over wilderness and conservation areas, that is not present currently. Moreover, the desert has been observed as a 'hot spot' or first indicator of the effects of climate change. These air quality reductions need further study to determine whether this change in land use will create unintended consequences such as more severe weather conditions.

AQ-1

2. Airspace, air traffic

Airspace will overlay onto conservation areas in the San Bernardino Mountains. For instance, the airspace mapping presented at the workshops was woefully inadequate to the point of misinformation. The airspace was drawn over a topographical map that included no human activities (no roads, communities, conservation areas, federal lands). In light of the military's excellent mapping capabilities, it leads one to believe the military did not want to inform stakeholders. NEPA requires that the lead agency share information with stakeholders to insure they make informed decisions: this has not been the case thus far in the public scoping process.

AIR-1

3. Biological resources

The Johnson Valley area is home to the oldest living creature (14,000+ years) in the world: the Creosote (i.e. the King Clone grove), as well as prime, desert tortoise habitat. There will be increased damage and impact to the biological resources (vegetation and wildlife) that will inevitably occur since riders will be forced to recreate on lands outside the OHV area. There are high conservation values outside the recreation area that will be lost if the military chooses their preferred alternative for this land acquisition study.

BIO-1

4. Land use

The land has been set-aside for multi-use and incorporates mining, off road use, vital wildlife connectivity, among others. Change in this land use will permanently obviate those needs and uses.

LU-1

5. Public lands withdrawal

The withdrawal of public lands that were set aside for off road use (BLM Johnson Valley OHV recreation/open area) will greatly disrupt the conservation lands and surrounding communities. This area is widely used by folks from outside areas (i.e. cities, foreign countries, and local communities). These people will be forced to trespass and ride onto adjacent private and protected lands. Those affected will not have the resources to fight off this mass trespass.

REC-2

In addition, the County of San Bernardino and communities like Lucerne Valley, Victorville, Johnson Valley, Landers, Yucca Valley, Morongo Valley and Joshua Tree will suffer economically. The County receives no property tax revenue from these lands but at least it attracts recreation dollars. Small communities like Lucerne Valley depend on income from this recreation and event hot spot and they will suffer needlessly if that income is eliminated by this permanent withdrawal.

SOC-1

Response to Comment 2287 (Page 2 of 6):

**AIR-1:**

The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

**BIO-1:**

Comment noted. The biological resources within the portion of Johnson Valley that fall within the land acquisition area are described in the Draft EIS. The creosote grove known as “King Clone” does not fall within the acquisition area, but as noted in your comment, it and other biological resources could be affected by intensified OHV usage in the remaining Johnson Valley OHV Area for Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5, and 6. This potential intensification of usage is described in Section 4.2 Recreation, and based on ESA Section 7 consultation with USFWS additional text regarding the potential effects of this intensification has been added to Section 4.10.2 and elsewhere in Section 4.10.

**LU-1:**

Section 4.1 of the EIS identifies Significant Impacts to Land Use Plans and Policies under each action alternative. Please see EIS

Comment ID: 2287 (Page 3 of 6)

6. Noise

Considerable noise pollution will result as a consequence of displaced OHV activity in the surrounding communities. The new airspace expansion will intrude into conserved natural areas that were created to protect wilderness qualities like quietude.

NOI-1

7. Recreation

This recreation area was set aside through a promise from the federal government to the American people and is the largest designated off-road vehicle area in the nation, used internationally. No recognition of or allowance has been made to offset this significant loss.

REC-3

8. Socioeconomics

Surrounding communities such as Lucerne Valley, depend on the income that is generated from people that come to recreate at Johnson Valley OHV area and from its annual events. The area that is proposed to be closed to recreational activity (even if temporarily) holds large annual events such as the King of the Hammers, that create much needed tourism dollars for the community of Lucerne Valley, and without it, the loss of income will be stinging and irreplaceable. Along with this revenue loss, expenses to the community will go up. Furthermore, there is the issue of law enforcement. With population in California dramatically higher now than before the creation of Johnson Valley OHV area, additional law enforcement will be needed to offset the resulting significance of displaced OHV activity and to maintain the status quo of personal security. Private property rights will once again, go forgotten. Trespasses onto adjacent and private lands that will result from the reality of the proposed alternative will ultimately go unaddressed due to the current lack of law enforcement in the Bureau of Land Management. It will be necessary to increase law enforcement personnel to compensate for this shift of the workload. If the focus shifts to these new trespasses, the current law enforcement will certainly relinquish other issues of crime and illegal activity.

SOC-2

PHS-1

It also needs to be recognized that Johnson Valley and its OHV area draws in the filming community. People come from all over the world to film the unique landscapes the desert has to offer. This is prevalent in Johnson Valley because no permits are required to partake in this activity. This issue has not been examined or given any consideration in regards to mitigation thus far in the draft EIS.

SOC-3

Other Alternatives:

Nearby Fort Irwin has available lands, and as the different branches of the military frequently interact together in real world scenarios, the benefits of conducting joint operations between the two bases as an alternative to the taking of public lands is strongly recommended.

NEPA-2

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the draft EIS of the proposed land acquisition and expansion/airspace establishment study. We urge you to consider a 'no action' alternative based on these substantial environmental impacts the preferred alternative generates. Displacing OHV activity onto adjacent public, private, and conserved lands will only devastate the unique and treasured quality of living in the California Desert and subvert all the efforts of agencies, regional governments and citizens to accommodate, enjoy, and contain this public sector.

GEN-1

Response to Comment 2287 (Page 3 of 6):

Table 4.1.3 for information on why particular alternatives would be significant impacts to Land Use Plans and Policies.

**REC-2:**

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**SOC-1:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational spending.

**NOI-1:**

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-

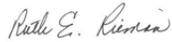
**Comment ID: 2287 (Page 4 of 6)**

Sincerely,

April Sall, Chair



Ruth Rieman, Vice Chair



**Response to Comment 2287 (Page 4 of 6):**

event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

**REC-3:**

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**SOC-2:**

Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending.

**PHS-1:**

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID: 2287 (Page 5 of 6)**

**Response to Comment 2287 (Page 5 of 6):**

**SOC-3:**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related film industry spending.

**NEPA-2:**

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better

**Comment ID: 2287 (Page 6 of 6)**

**Response to Comment 2287 (page 6 of 6):**

accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

**GEN-1:**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2288

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The

Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2289

**Last Name** Slavik

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** Dear interested parties, Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the expansion of the 29 Palms Marine base. I have spent many summer camps with the National Guard driving tanks in Ft. Erwin not far from your facility. I fully support our country's armed forces but am against the expansion of 29 Palms Marine Base west into Johnson Valley! I cannot support any of the proposed alternatives. I have recreated in the California Desert since the early 60's when most of the public desert land was accessible. As population pressure along with environmentalism grew, the OHV community was restricted to public land designated for that use with the expectation that that use would continue in perpetuity. The expansion into Johnson Valley would have dire environmental affects on the remaining OHV opportunity. My understanding is that there are 120,000 to 150,000 visitors to Johnson Valley by actual count and many more that are casual users that can't be counted. Where are all these people going to go? The DEIS has not provided for mitigation for the impacts to other legal OHV opportunity as well as increased OHV activities on lands that have OHV restrictions. Please consider these comments with the utmost seriousness, Thank you, Paul Slavik Commissioner, California State Parks, OHMVR Division

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. Furthermore, as discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to

reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding impacts from displaced OHV useage and the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

**Comment ID** 2290

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please try Nevada

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2291

**Last Name** Russell

**First Name** Richard

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson

Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Richard Russell Avid offroad family and long time users of the Johnson Valley OHV.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2292

**Last Name** Schmitt

**First Name** Carl

**Comment** Thank you for the opportunity to comment. I wish to strongly protest any inclusion of the western public areas in projected boundaries of the 29 Palms Marine Base training areas. International desert combat operations are beginning to wind down and the massive amounts of precious local environments and resources for the stated purposes is short-sighted at best.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2293

**Last Name** Avels

**First Name** Jamie

**Comment** I stand with the American Motorcyclist Association, Blueribbon Coalition, Town of Apple Valley, Ca. Town of Yucca Valley, Ca., City of Twentynine Palms, Ca., Lucerne Valley, Ca. numerous motorcycle and 4x4 off highway vehicle groups and associations, and ask that you chose a NO-ACTION ALTERNATIVE for the 29 Palms training land acquisition.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2294

**Last Name** Heck

**First Name** Kimberly

**Comment** Please reconsider your land acquisition into the Johnson Valley. The harm to our small community of Lucerne Valley will be extreme. Thank you, Kimberly Heck

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and

direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2295

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Any westward expansion would negatively impact the Johnson Valley OHV area as well as the local economy as many small businesses rely upon the income brought in by the recreational use of Johnson valley. In addition, the local economy shows their largest profits on weekends that have off-road races in the Johnson Valley OHV area. Races such as the MORE 500 and King of the Hammers bring thousands of competitors, spectators and vendors to this area. We ask that the Marines expand the base to the East per option 3.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2296

**Last Name** Clarke

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** It is clear from General James F. Amos's 2011 report to Congress on the Posture of the Marine Corps that there is no need to train 3 MEB's. I have included quotes from General James F. Amos. Ken Clarke CURRENT

quotes from General James F. Amos, Commandant of the Marine Corps: "But we see that's probably what the world is going to look like for the next two decades. A lot more information there, but we think that's going to be our backyard because this is primarily the littorals, because these are kind of the nasty missions and things that, quite honestly, don't require 20,000 Marines on the ground. They may only require a Marine rifle company; they may require a training team to go in and help train border police of some of the nations that we want to help gird up and secure their borders." "We know we're a second land army; we've got to get back to our amphibious roots, we've got to € and then all of a sudden people started using that language. And then they became critical of us: Well, we don't need another second land army." "And we're making efforts. We already cancelled some programs that we not only didn't need but were way too big and way too heavy." "We are going to lighten the Marine Corps. We're an air-ground task force. Now, it's going to take " it'll go past " it'll go to the 36th and probably the 37th commandant, but we are going to do it. And we're in the process of doing it right now." "I refer to our Marine Corps today as a "middleweight force." I liken it to boxing: If you're a middleweight boxer, you can box up into the heavyweight division, or you can box down into a lightweight division by simply changing your weight and your training regimen. The same is true for the Marine Corps. We fill the void in our nation's defense for an agile force that is comfortable operating at the high and the low ends of the threat spectrum, or the ambiguous areas in between. Larger than special operations forces but lighter and more expeditionary than conventional Army units, we engage and respond quickly, often from the sea with enough force to carry the day upon arrival."

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific

portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2297

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I strongly oppose the expansion into Johnson Valley for the following reasons... 1. The land mass of Johnson Valley totals nearly 200,000 acres. It is the largest designated OHV area in the country. The impact of it's closure would adversely affect the already limited resources available to off-road enthusiast in the region. 2. The closure would negatively impact remaining OHV areas both concerning the environment as well as personal safety as a result of increased and heavily concentrated use. Injury and even death will likely increase from over population of other BLM and Forest Service managed lands in the future should the base extend into Johnson Valley. 3. Increased use of Federal, State, and Local public lands will put additional pressure on land managers resulting in greater restriction to motorized recreation. The result of concentrated use will create increased environmental concerns likely leading to further closures in the future, thus compounding the problem. 4. In the San Bernardino County portion of the Mojave desert the military currently uses areas of Federal land for China Lake Naval Weapons Center, Fort Irwin National Training Center, Twenty Nine Palms Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center, and a portion of Edwards Air Force Base. This along with countless Wilderness designated areas already severely restricts public motorized access on public lands. Other western States with similar topography should be studied. 5. The USMC should study cooperative use of existing military bases, including all

branches of the U.S. Military, to accommodate their training goals. The USMC has indicated in their scoping meetings that training exercises would be held only once or twice each year. China Lake, Fort Irwin and other nearby military bases may provide the needed land area for live fire training, while also allowing the opportunity to train for mobilization. This may not only meet the Marine Corps training objectives, but also provide a more effective and efficient use of Federal lands. 6. Expansion to the east would only require de-designation of a small portion of the Sheephole Valley Wilderness. Although political leaders have shown resistance to the idea, military training is a benefit to the entire Nation and the responsibility should be shared equitably among all Americans, not just off-road enthusiasts. The number of designated wilderness areas far outnumber designated OHV areas in the Mojave desert. 7. Once used for live military fire, Johnson Valley would become an area restricted and off-limits to future generations in perpetuity, regardless if the needs of the USMC change and diminish in the future. Respectfully, Ed Hills

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered these and other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was

carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2298

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** To Whom it may concern: I understand the importance of having a proper training environment for our Military and Johnson Valley may be very appealing, but this area is one of the last open areas left for off-road enthusiasts to enjoy. There used to be so many options for off-roaders to enjoy but over the past three decades many areas have been closed down leaving very few choices that are still close to Los Angeles. Please consider another locations besides an existing off-road recreation area. There must be some BLM land that would be viable a military training location. Sincerely, Donny Sandusky 310 334 9736

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS). The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2299

**Last Name** Clarke

**First Name** Ken

**Comment** The Marine Corps published the wrong address for where to send comments. This has caused much confusion. It seems to me that The Marine Corps should withdraw the DEIS and start over and follow NEPA to the letter.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2300

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** please do not take any more of our riding area. we have so little area that we as a family can go

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas.

The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

<b>Comment ID</b>	2301
<b>Last Name</b>	Diamond
<b>First Name</b>	R
<b>Comment</b>	[please see attached]
<b>Date Comment Received</b>	5/26/2011
<b>Response</b>	Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2301 (Page 1 of 2)**

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Cc: Mr. Chris Proudfoot, MAGTFTC

Re: Proposed Expansion of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base

May 24, 2011

To Whom It May Concern —

First, I would like to commend the MCAGCC and the authors of the thorough and highly-detailed Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that they have presented for public review. The report is very comprehensive, and the effort in creating it and candor it represents is very much appreciated.

Having reviewed the document, I would like to register some concerns regarding the proposed expansion plans.

Arguably one of the most significant and immediate effects of training at the Base upon the surrounding area is the explosive vibration propagated throughout the Morongo Basin during live fire exercises. The larger ordnances (presumably artillery) can routinely make the ground shake *twenty to thirty miles away*—far beyond the confines of the Base proper. This is one of the most significant overall impacts on day-to-day living for residents of the region, as many such “hits” are subjectively reminiscent of a modest earthquake, and much more frequent.

The DEIS has attempted to account for these undesired externalities in Table 4.1-2, “Projected Ordnance Noise.”

Notably, though, those estimates utilize *C-Weighted* measurements. Indeed, at relatively close distances to the ordnance (i.e., on-base), the resulting noise is more broad-spectrum; hence, this makes for a perfectly adequate measurement in that case.

*However*, at longer distances (i.e., in the numerous residential areas of the Basin), most of the vibration transmitted is very low frequency (much of it below 20 Hertz). At those frequencies, the “rolloff” utilized in the C-weighting curve dramatically underestimates the intensity of those shocks — by anywhere from approximately 10 to 25 decibels.

This is not your typical residential noise.

Further, because ordnance fire creates *impact* vibration (which is intermittent), rather than typical *ambient* noise, simply averaging the measurements over a 24-hour period (as per CNEL) further underestimates its net effect.

Indeed, these measurement biases are inevitably reflected in Table 4.1-2, as well as the report’s conclusions, which are correspondingly minimizing in this regard.

Given the unique nature of the phenomenon being measured, the numbers as presented are actually quite deceiving; and thus, in this key regard, the DEIS falls short of conveying accurate ramifications to the surrounding population of the expansion of the MCAGCC.

~~~~~

Recommendations:

In order to mitigate the environmental impact, a key and common-sense goal of the expansion might be to shift heavy artillery fire further away from the more-populated western portion of the Morongo Basin, and for as much of the year as possible.

**Response to Comment 2301 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: 2301 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 2301 (Page 2 of 2):

This could still be accomplished in the context of expanding the Base, and meeting its expanded operational needs.

For example, a land acquisition such as Alternative 6 might better meet all of these requirements if it incorporated modifications such as these:

- *West-to-East* direction of maneuver, similar to that in Alternative 4. This presumably shifts more of the heavy live fire toward an MEB Objective in the eastern (and less populated) end of the Basin.

- MEB Building Block training within *existing* Combat Center boundaries (also a la Alternative 4), as opposed to in the west study area. This is particularly important in view of the necessity of such training “up to 40 weeks/year” [see Table 2.3].

~~~~~

More than many other concerns addressed in the report, the effects of ordnance noise can arguably be felt (quite literally) far outside the confines of the Base. Thus, the changes proposed in the report could easily have a detrimental impact on the surrounding community, if not planned for carefully.

Given the conscientious tone of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and keeping the above considerations in mind, it should be possible to better balance the imperative for expansion of the Base with these externalities, and thus help preserve the quality of life for the majority of residents of the Morongo Basin, now and into the future.

~~~~~

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS and the proposed expansion. I hope that this feedback proves of value to the planning process and the final report.

If you need any clarification to any of the foregoing, kindly do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Yours,



R. Diamond  
56925 Yucca Trail #320  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

**Comment ID** 2302

**Last Name** Wood

**First Name** Dave

**Comment** I am writing to oppose the Twenty-nine Palms Training Land Acquisition Project. The DEIS for the project is defective, and its analysis of related impacts is inadequate. The only alternative I can support is the "No Action" alternative. Any other alternative would pose unacceptable economic and recreational losses to the people of South-Western United States. My family and I have been using this land for decades. We relax on it, we race on it, we drive on it, we spend time together as a family. The public deserts such as the Johnson Valley OHV area and BLM land in general is a critical and integral part of our family life. It allows us and our children to experience nature, get exercise and enjoy ourselves. We visit these deserts many times a year, we plan our homes and our lives and our purchases around it. To support our hobby we buy motorcycles, cars, safety gear, camping equipment, food, lights, tires, and countless other products, resources and services. Each loss of public land impacts the towns and cities that service people like us in the off-road community. Every time we use or visit the desert we spend money in these towns, before, during and after our trip. Places like Barstow, Victorville, 29 Palms, all would unfortunately receive less money from my family and I as a result of reduced recreational and off-road sporting opportunities. Additionally, closing public lands reduces public safety. When public land is lost, the desert users are forced into less and less space. This inevitably increases the chances of accidents and thereby reduces our safety. The existing DEIS is inadequate and it's findings in regards to local impact are in contradiction with my own life-long experiences. The "Preferred Alternative" in the DEIS must be rejected on the basis that it is immoral to take the limited public land away from the public on such poorly demonstrated grounds as expressed in the DEIS. I can only support the "No Action" alternative.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed

action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2303

**Last Name** Rimer

**First Name** Douglas

**Comment** As an avid off road motorcycle rider and racer, my family and friends have for many years cherished our use of the Johnson Valley area for recreation, healthy competition and camaraderie. There are fewer and fewer legal alternative areas to participate in the truly unique experience of off-road riding, not only for current enthusiasts, but for generations to come. Closure of the Johnson Valley ORV area denies the public an opportunity to introduce young people to an intensely physical challenge in a spectacular natural environment, to teach them toughness and sportsmanship, and to appreciate that there is a refuge from the day-to-day stress beyond the city limits. Not all terrain is the same; I do not know if military training requires the specific terrain that Johnson Valley has to offer, but it is a unique place for off-road riders that cannot be substituted or replaced. So the effect of a closure will truly be felt by many people that really care about this. I can only hope it is possible for decision makers to make an effort approach this issue with an open mind, and keep in mind that families such as theirs are being significantly impacted by their decisions. Our government was founded on the principals of "for the people, by the people", and the people are trying to send a message that the closure of Johnson Valley is an unacceptable outcome.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would

be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

|                              |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2304                                                                                   |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Cleveland                                                                              |
| <b>First Name</b>            | John                                                                                   |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please see comments uploaded in attached pdf.                                          |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                              |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter. |

Comment ID: 2304 (Page 1 of 5)

May 26, 2011

Writer's contact information:  
John P. Cleveland  
258 Avenida Montalvo Apt. A  
San Clemente, CA 92672  
johnpcleveland@yahoo.com

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132

Via e-mail to [SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil](mailto:SMBPLMSWEBPAO@USMC.mil), U.S. Mail, upload at [https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms\\_DEIS/](https://extranet.tecinc.com/29Palms_DEIS/)

**Re: *Comments on Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for the proposed Expansion of the 29 Palms USMC Base***

Dear Project Manager:

I am writing to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment for the proposed Expansion of the 29 Palms USMC Base ("Draft EIS"). I recreate frequently in Johnson Valley and participate in American Motorcyclist Association District 37 motorcycle racing events held in Johnson Valley. The public Off Highway Vehicle ("OHV") land in Johnson Valley is to Southern California, as Central Park is to New Yorkers. The proposed expansion would eliminate the largest and most important single piece of OHV land in the United States.

The detrimental effect of taking this large contiguous piece of land is multiplied by Johnson Valley's proximity to the densely populated Southern California population. In other words, no other piece of land is more important to a greater number of recreational users. The primary flaw in the Draft EIS is its failure to recognize the nexus of (1) Johnson Valley's large contiguous OHV space; and (2) its close proximity to dense population centers of Southern California, which are filled with millions of persons who use the public lands for recreating. The Draft EIS does not include an adequate analysis of the value associated with this nexus. The Draft EIS fails to address the heightened effect/harm caused by taking the most important piece of land closest to the greatest number of users in the country. The failure to evaluate all of the recreational impacts of eliminating this OHV land is reason alone for stopping the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley or, at a minimum, requiring a supplemental environmental impact analysis and allowing for further public comments. The Draft EIS suffers from other flaws and does not conform to the requirements of National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") as more specifically stated below.

1

Response to Comment 2304 (Page 1 of 5):

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Please see Appendix M of the Final EIS for information on alternate OHV areas and some associated environmental impacts.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to

**Comment ID: 2304 (Page 2 of 5)**

For the reasons state herein, I object to Draft EIS and the proposed expansion of the 29 Palms base into Johnson Valley, demand further analysis and preparation of a revised draft EIS that is corrected and allows for further public comment. Without waiving any rights and without conceding the adequacy or accuracy of the Draft EIS in anyway, I request that the no action alternative be selected. I further object to any alternative that takes public land in Johnson Valley. Without a supplemental analysis in the form of a revised draft EIS, the Draft EIS underlying this proposed 29 Palms expansion will remain incomplete and inaccurate and any taking/withdrawal of land based on the Draft EIS would be inconsistent with NEPA and the requirements for completing an EIS.

**I. The Draft EIS Does Not Sufficiently Identify a Need for Action**

The scoping and contemplated expansion of the 29 Palms base was initiated years ago under the Bush administration. The United States budget deficit and changing military needs do not currently warrant any expansion, and in particular the expansion of the base into Johnson Valley. Military activities in Iraq and Afghanistan have been scaled down since the initial scoping period. A supplemental Draft EIS should be prepared which appropriately states the need for the expansion under current budget and military conditions.

The need for taking Johnson Valley land has not been articulated and the reasons for selecting 29 Palms for expansion over other base alternatives, such as South Carolina, was not adequately addressed in the Draft EIS. Although the expansion into Johnson Valley may be convenient for the Marines, it is not necessary. The military claims that no other base in the U.S. is more appropriate than 29 Palms for expansion. The Marine's contend 29 Palms is already so large that a further expansion at 29 Palms into Johnson Valley would be the most appropriate place to fulfill their training objections—in essence 29 Palms is “too big to fail.” The contention does not constitute a valid statement of a purpose or need for the expansion into Johnson Valley under NEPA.

Although expanding 29 Palms may be convenient for the military, when that convenience is balanced against the full impact of the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley, the scale tips decidedly in favor of no action, or no expansion into Johnson Valley. In fact, when I attended an Open House Public Meeting presented by the military in Victorville, California on April 14, 2011, I met with Lt. Col. Bruce Nyholm and Lt. Col. Brent Nyquist who explained that the Marines would only be actively using live ordinance in the proposed Johnson Valley portion of the 29 Palm base expansion for three (3) days per year, per live exercise (to be held twice a year). Removing public land from Johnson Valley for such a minimal amount of time cannot be justified when the cost and impacts of the proposed expansion are considered.

Given the failure to articulate a need for the expansion under current conditions, the current budget crises, the significant impact on the Southern California economy and OHV recreational opportunities, the need for an accurate and complete Draft EIS is all the more important.

**Response to Comment 2304 (Page 2 of 5):**

the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

The Marine Corps understands the public’s concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM’s

**Comment ID: 2304 (Page 3 of 5)**

**2. All Environmental Consequences Have Not Been Adequately Evaluated**

The Draft EIS does not consider all of the environmental impacts of the proposed expansion into Johnson Valley. If Johnson Valley were taken, current users would very likely need to travel longer distances to reach open OHV land. The effect on OHV users travelling longer distances to alternative OHV sites has not been considered. The Draft EIS could have, but did not, identify the location of alternative OHV recreational areas to which the millions of persons who currently use Johnson Valley will have to drive in order to recreate, nor the environmental impact of that change or relocation including, without limitation, the effect on air quality and carbon emissions. The air quality and carbon footprint of travelling those distances has not been adequately considered. The Draft EIS is insufficient without such an analysis.

**3. The Analysis of the Impact on Recreation is Inadequate**

Johnson Valley is a unique open land used by millions of people for various OHV purposes. People from Southern California, Northern California, Nevada, Idaho and other areas around the country regularly use Johnson Valley for national motorcycle competitions. The Draft EIS fails to consider the national consequences of eliminating this open OHV space used by persons across the nation and the effect of eliminating this national resource. Further, as mentioned above, the Draft EIS fails to evaluate the nexus between the OHV land in Johnson Valley and the densely populated Southern California area. Supplemental analysis should be conducted to evaluate the adverse recreational impact on all users including, without limitation, residents of Los Angeles County, Orange County, San Diego County Ventura County, Riverside County, Southern Nevada, and Idaho.

A supplemental draft EIS should identify and include the cost of providing the public with substantially similar substitute lands on which they might recreate.

**4. The Analysis of the Socio-Economic and Environmental Justice Impacts is Inadequate**

The report is woefully inadequate in its evaluation of economic impacts. The scope of the socio-economic and environmental justice impacts is too narrow and the analysis contains unfounded assumptions. If Johnson Valley is taken most, if not all, of the recreational activity occurring therein will be lost along with the sales revenue, jobs, and tax revenue associated with that recreation. The Draft EIS does not consider the effect of lost sales throughout the nation let alone Southern California, lost sales taxes, lost state and federal income taxes, lost employment, and lost property taxes. For example, in direct connection with my use of Johnson Valley I spend on average approximately \$150 on motorcycle parts per month, another approximate \$150 on fuel travelling to and returning home from Johnson Valley each trip. I also buy groceries and supplies for camping in Johnson Valley and I buy food at restaurants in connection with my trips to and from Johnson Valley; the money spent on these food and supply items ranges from approximately \$50 to \$300 for a group of persons, per trip. Depending on the circumstances, I buy these items in Johnson Valley, in the surrounding communities, and/or near my home in Orange County, California. The Draft EIS fails to adequately evaluate the economic impact of my spending outside the small town of Johnson Valley the effect of that lost spending activity if

**Response to Comment 2304 (Page 3 of 5):**

management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

The EIS evaluates impacts to cultural resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.11). As noted in the EIS, impacts to cultural resources would be significant under any action alternative.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2304 (Page 4 of 5)

Response to Comment 2304 (Page 4 of 5):

Johnson Valley is taken. As a result, the Draft EIS economic analysis is inadequate and should be supplemented.

As to the Draft EIS's consideration of the impact of my spending in Johnson Valley, the report makes assumptions and under-estimates the amount of money spent by users of Johnson Valley. The Draft EIS should be revised to more accurately identify the number of people and the amounts spent by those people travelling to and from Johnson Valley and how those figures will change if Johnson Valley is taken in whole or in part.

**5. The Analysis of the Public Health and Safety Impacts is Inadequate**

The Draft EIS fails to consider the expansion's potential for increasing illegal off-road use and related adverse effects on the public's health and safety. Although not appropriate, the reality is that the taking of the single most valuable piece of contiguous OHV land in California without sufficient mitigation measure of providing substantially similar substitute land would very likely lead to illegal OHV because many persons would no longer have accessible public land on which to recreate. The Draft EIS does not address the consequences and costs of this activity including, without limitation, additional lawful enforcement activity.

The Draft EIS and the military's entire plan for massive live fire drills, including the use of major jet fighter and other aircraft, so close to major population centers is alarming. The Draft EIS does not adequately address the potential adverse public health and safety impact of: (1) potential errant munitions harming the public, animals, or natural resources surrounding the 29 Palms base; and (2) the potential for unexploded ordinance at or near the proposed expansion borders to cause harm to the public, animals or nature resources surrounding the base. No matter how small the chance of such harm, the consequences would be severe. Supplemental analysis should address the risk and impact of these potential harms.

**6. The Analysis of the Adverse Impact on Cultural Resources Inadequate**

The Draft EIS fails to adequately evaluate the adverse effect on cultural resources. The decision to expand the 29 Palms base in a manner that takes any or all of Johnson Valley goes against American principles of freedom and family. Johnson Valley contains open lands with varied views of vistas, geologic formations and contiguous open spaces that are uniquely suitable for motorcycle and other desert racing. Families use Johnson Valley for camping and competing in off-road motorcycle racing events and enjoy the freedom provided by large expanses of open OHV space. Children and adults compete, exercise, and learn to solve problems and operate independently in challenging desert racing events. This desert racing culture has been enjoyed by multiple generations of families. The OHV land in Johnson Valley cannot be replaced—no other similar open OHV land exists in California. The Draft EIS fails to evaluate the harmful human effect of eliminating this culture and this cultural experience of recreating in this manner in the remote environment offered only in Johnson Valley.

To allow a taking of this valuable land without conforming to the requirements of NEPA and based on a flawed EIS would undercut the very principles of freedom that Marines fight to protect in the first place.

Comment ID: 2304 (Page 5 of 5)

Response to Comment 2304 (Page 5 of 5):

**7. Conclusion**

The Draft EIS is incomplete under NEPA and inaccurate as written. In order to properly evaluate the full costs and impacts of the proposed 29 Palms expansion, supplemental analysis and/or a supplemental draft EIS and corrections to the existing Draft EIS are required. I object to any expansion of the base into the OHV areas of Johnson Valley and request that a supplemental Draft EIS report be completed with opportunity for further public comments for the reasons stated herein.

Sincerely,



John P. Cleveland

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2305

**Last Name** Diamond

**First Name** R

**Comment** [please see attached]

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2305 (Page 1 of 2)

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Cc: Mr. Chris Proudfoot, MAGTFTC

Re: Proposed Expansion of the Twentynine Palms Marine Base

May 24, 2011

To Whom It May Concern —

First, I would like to commend the MCAGCC and the authors of the thorough and highly-detailed Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) that they have presented for public review. The report is very comprehensive, and the effort in creating it and candor it represents is very much appreciated.

Having reviewed the document, I would like to register some concerns regarding the proposed expansion plans.

Arguably one of the most significant and immediate effects of training at the Base upon the surrounding area is the explosive vibration propagated throughout the Morongo Basin during live fire exercises. The larger ordnances (presumably artillery) can routinely make the ground shake *twenty to thirty miles away* — far beyond the confines of the Base proper. This is one of the most significant overall impacts on day-to-day living for residents of the region, as many such “hits” are subjectively reminiscent of a modest earthquake, and much more frequent.

The DEIS has attempted to account for these undesired externalities in Table 4.1-2, “Projected Ordnance Noise.”

Notably, though, those estimates utilize *C-Weighted* measurements. Indeed, at relatively close distances to the ordnance (i.e., on-base), the resulting noise is more broad-spectrum; hence, this makes for a perfectly adequate measurement in that case.

*However*, at longer distances (i.e., in the numerous residential areas of the Basin), most of the vibration transmitted is very low frequency (much of it below 20 Hertz). At those frequencies, the “rolloff” utilized in the C-weighting curve dramatically underestimates the intensity of those shocks — by anywhere from approximately 10 to 25 decibels.

This is not your typical residential noise.

Further, because ordnance fire creates *impact* vibration (which is intermittent), rather than typical *ambient* noise, simply averaging the measurements over a 24-hour period (as per CNEL) further underestimates its net effect.

Indeed, these measurement biases are inevitably reflected in Table 4.1-2, as well as the report’s conclusions, which are correspondingly minimizing in this regard.

Given the unique nature of the phenomenon being measured, the numbers as presented are actually quite deceiving; and thus, in this key regard, the DEIS falls short of conveying accurate ramifications to the surrounding population of the expansion of the MCAGCC.

Recommendations:

In order to mitigate the environmental impact, a key and common-sense goal of the expansion might be to shift heavy artillery fire further away from the more-populated western portion of the Morongo Basin, and for as much of the year as possible.

Response to Comment 2305 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Comment ID: 2305 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 2305 (Page 2 of 2):

This could still be accomplished in the context of expanding the Base, and meeting its expanded operational needs.

For example, a land acquisition such as Alternative 6 might better meet all of these requirements if it incorporated modifications such as these:

- *West-to-East* direction of maneuver, similar to that in Alternative 4. This presumably shifts more of the heavy live fire toward an MEB Objective in the eastern (and less populated) end of the Basin.

- MEB Building Block training within *existing* Combat Center boundaries (also a la Alternative 4), as opposed to in the west study area. This is particularly important in view of the necessity of such training “up to 40 weeks/year” [see Table 2.3].

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More than many other concerns addressed in the report, the effects of ordnance noise can arguably be felt (quite literally) far outside the confines of the Base. Thus, the changes proposed in the report could easily have a detrimental impact on the surrounding community, if not planned for carefully.

Given the conscientious tone of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and keeping the above considerations in mind, it should be possible to better balance the imperative for expansion of the Base with these externalities, and thus help preserve the quality of life for the majority of residents of the Morongo Basin, now and into the future.

~~~~~

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the DEIS and the proposed expansion. I hope that this feedback proves of value to the planning process and the final report.

If you need any clarification to any of the foregoing, kindly do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully Yours,



R. Diamond  
56925 Yucca Trail #320  
Yucca Valley, CA 92284

**Comment ID** 2306

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** --

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Please see the response to comment to letters 2304 and 2305.

**Comment ID** 2307

**Last Name** aRMSTRONG

**First Name** Sean

**Comment** please do not close johnson valley, its the last open riding area in so cal. more people will get hurt when you close riding areas because it makes the remaining open ones that much more crowded. and you guys are marines, you won ww2 in the pacific. why do you need this land now? osama is dead. my father was a marine during vietnam and he still rides with us and he's 60!

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

|                              |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2308                                                                                   |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Oggins                                                                                 |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Cy                                                                                     |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please see attached file.                                                              |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                              |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter. |

Comment ID: 2308 (Page 1 of 3)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EDMUND G. BROWN JR., Governor

CALIFORNIA STATE LANDS COMMISSION  
100 Howe Avenue, Suite 100-South  
Sacramento, CA 95825-8202



May 26, 2011

CURTIS L. FOSSUM, Executive Officer  
(916) 574-1800 FAX (916) 574-1810  
California Relay Service From TDD Phone 1-800-735-2929  
from Voice Phone 1-800-735-2922

Contact Phone: (916) 574-1890  
Contact FAX: (916) 574-1885

File Ref: SD # 2008-09-17.1

Naval Facilities Engineering Command Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

**Subject: Notice of Availability of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study Contiguous to the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, San Bernardino County**

Dear Sir or Madam:

The California State Lands Commission (CSLC) staff has reviewed the subject EIS for 29 Palms Training Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study (Project), which is being prepared by the Department of the Navy (DON) as the lead agency under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) (42 U.S.C. § 4321 et seq.). The CSLC has prepared these comments because of its jurisdiction over portions of the Project located on state school lands as well as its trust responsibility for any and all projects that could directly or indirectly affect state owned "sovereign" land and/or school lands, and their resources or uses (pursuant to CEQA Guidelines<sup>1</sup> §§ 15381, 15386, subd. (b)).

The EIS is being prepared to evaluate the potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed establishment of a large-scale training range facility at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms, California (the "Combat Center") to accommodate Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) training. To implement the proposed action, the Marine Corps would acquire additional land adjacent to the Combat Center, establish and modify military Special Use Airspace (SUA) above the proposed MEB-sized training range, and conduct specified MEB training.

**CSLC Jurisdiction**

In 1853, the United States Congress granted to California hundreds of thousands of acres of land for the specific purpose of supporting public schools. In 1984, the State Legislature passed the School Land Bank Act (Act), which established the School Land Bank Fund (SLBF) and appointed the CSLC as its trustee (Pub. Resources Code § 8700 et seq.). The Act directed the CSLC to develop school lands into a permanent

<sup>1</sup> The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

Response to Comment 2308 (Page 1 of 3):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has met with the State of California to discuss CEQA requirements for state actions that could be undertaken following the project decision. State agencies are encouraged to use NEPA documents when such documents comply with CEQA. To the extent practicable, the EIS has incorporated CEQA requirements to allow state agencies to utilize the EIS analysis to support any future project-specific analyses that may be required by CEQA.

Comment ID: 2308 (Page 2 of 3)

Response to Comment 2308 (Page 2 of 3):

29 Palms EIS Project Manager

Page 2

May 26, 2011

and productive resource base for revenue generating purposes. The CSLC manages approximately 469,000 acres of school lands held in fee ownership by the State and the reserved mineral interests on an additional 790,000± acres where the surfaces estates have been sold. Revenue from school lands is deposited in the State Treasury for the benefit of the Teachers' Retirement Fund (Pub. Resources Code § 6217.5).

On January 27, 2009, CSLC staff submitted comments in response to the Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS. In order to determine the State's interest in the Project, CSLC staff requested a more detailed map showing exactly where the proposed Project would be located. Based on information contained on the maps provided to the CSLC by Project representatives, staff has identified more than 8,000 acres of fee-owned school lands within the areas analyzed in the EIS (including all alternatives), and an additional, 15,000± acres of lands with reserved mineral interests. This conclusion is without prejudice to any future assertion of State ownership or public rights, should circumstances change, or should additional information become available. This letter is not intended, nor should it be construed as, a waiver or limitation of any right, title, or interest of the State of California in any lands under its jurisdiction.

Because the Project would involve the use of school lands, the DON would need to purchase the identified school lands from the CSLC at fair-market value. The sale of these lands would require approval by the CSLC at a properly noticed public meeting, and as a discretionary action, would also require the CSLC to comply with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code § 21000 et seq.). The CEQA Guidelines provide a mechanism by which an EIS can be used by an approving agency if specified conditions are met (see generally §§ 15220-15225). In early 2009, CSLC staff and Project representatives discussed the CSLC's obligations under CEQA. As part of these discussions, Project representatives indicated that the EIS would meet CEQA requirements. CSLC staff has reviewed the EIS for compliance with the conditions set forth in CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines and offers the following comments.

Circulation of Documents:

Pursuant to section 15225 of the CEQA Guidelines, the CSLC may only use the EIS in place of an Environmental Impact Report if the federal lead agency circulated the EIS in accordance with CEQA and gave notice of the document's availability as specified in section 15087 of the CEQA Guidelines. Because the CSLC is a state agency, when it acts as a lead agency under CEQA, it is required to circulate environmental documents through the State Clearinghouse at the Governor's Office of Planning and Research. For the Project EIS, CSLC staff has been unable to verify that the DON gave such notice; therefore, prior to the DON's approval of the Project and before the CSLC can use the EIS to consider approval of the sale of school lands for the Project, the EIS will need to be noticed and circulated in accordance with CEQA requirements. Please contact the CSLC staff identified below for further assistance in meeting this requirement.

Comment ID: 2308 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment 2308 (Page 3 of 3):

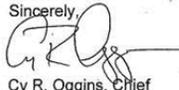
29 Palms EIS Project Manager

Page 3

May 26, 2011

Staff of the CSLC appreciates the opportunity to review and comment on the EIS for the proposed Project and looks forward to further communication from the DON regarding the purchase of school lands and the CSLC's CEQA compliance obligations. Please contact Jim Porter, Public Land Management Specialist, at 916-574-1865 or by email at [jim.porter@slc.ca.gov](mailto:jim.porter@slc.ca.gov), for information concerning the management, leasing, and sale of state school lands. If you have any questions concerning the environmental review, please contact Ben Lichty, Environmental Scientist, at (916) 574-1891 or by e-mail at [lichtyb@slc.ca.gov](mailto:lichtyb@slc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



Cy R. Oggins, Chief  
Division of Environmental Planning  
and Management

cc: Office of Planning and Research  
LMD, CSLC  
DEPM, CSLC

**Comment ID** 2309

**Last Name** Johnston

**First Name** David

**Comment** Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92132-5190 Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The DEIS states: Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No- Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed. 3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative. The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources: Less than Significant Impacts (LSI): Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction. Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources. No Impacts (NI): No impact anticipated from airspace establishment. Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives. However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries. Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

**Comment ID** 2310

**Last Name** Johnston

**First Name** David

**Comment** Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92132-5190 Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion Dear Sir: The DEIS states: Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No- Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed. 3.11 Cultural Resources. The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative. The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources: Less than Significant Impacts (LSI): Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and

individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction. Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources. No Impacts (NI): No impact anticipated from airspace establishment. Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives. However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries. Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this. The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas. They were founded under the

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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|                              |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2311                                                                                   |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Schneider                                                                              |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Amanda                                                                                 |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please see attached comment letter.                                                    |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                              |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter. |

Comment ID: 2311 (Page 1 of 6)

Response to Comment 2311 (Page 1 of 6):

GEN-1:

Comment noted.

GRESHAM | SAVAGE  
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

Amanda.Schneider@GreshamSavage.com · San Bernardino Office  
(909) 890-4499 · fax (909) 890-9877

May 26, 2011

VIA EMAIL AND FIRST CLASS MAIL

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
Proposed 29Palms Training Land/Airspace Establishment Project  
MAGTFTC, MCAGCC  
Bldg. 1554, Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Re: Comments to Proposed Twentynine Palms Land Acquisition/Airspace  
Establishment Project Draft EIS

Dear Mr. Proudfoot:

On behalf of TETRA Technologies, Inc. ("Tetra"), we are submitting this letter to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("EIS") for the proposed land acquisition to expand the Marine Corps facility. As you know, Tetra is a company that specializes in certain chemical production and oil and gas services. Tetra owns and operates two calcium chloride/sodium chloride production facilities that are located in the eastern study area of the proposed land acquisition, considered in Alternative 3 of the EIS, where it produces calcium chloride and sodium chloride by solar evaporation of naturally occurring brines beneath the operations. These two operations, the "Amboy Operation" and the "Lee Operation," are generally located to the east of the existing Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base, in southeastern San Bernardino County, primarily in T5N R12E, T4N R12E, T3N R15E, and T2N R15E, San Bernardino Meridian.

As we stated in our letter to Mr. Joseph Ross, dated January 29, 2009, we believe that our operations will be significantly impaired or potentially terminated if the eastern study area is selected for inclusion in the land acquisition. As such, we appreciate the Department of the Navy taking our concerns into consideration and agree with the Department's determination that Alternative 6, encompassing the western and southern study areas, is the preferred alternative and best way to achieve the three fundamental components of the proposed project.

GEN-1



RIVERSIDE 3750 University Avenue, Suite 250 • Riverside, California 92501  
SAN BERNARDINO 550 East Hospitality Lane, Suite 300 • San Bernardino, California 92408  
GreshamSavage.com

T28-001 - 07/2011

Comment ID: 2311 (Page 2 of 6)

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page 2

I. Acquisition of Land and Operational Feasibility.

The Draft EIS discusses threshold requirements for an alternative to be considered feasible. Action alternatives must be capable of providing land and associated airspace necessary to meet the minimum criteria. In addition, the alternatives were considered based on objective requirements for evaluating the desirability of an alternative. The stated objective requirements included the following: (i) Independent, offensive maneuver of three battalion task forces abreast and associated air combat element operations, with the three battalion task forces converging on a single MEB objective; (ii) 48-72 hours of continuous offensive operations by the three battalion task forces as they converge on a single MEB objective; and (iii) Integrated air and ground maneuver live-fire with optimized freedom of action to the greatest extent practicable considering operational range capabilities and munitions safety requirements. (DEIS at 2-83-84)

Alternative 3, comprising the east study area, although allowing for three battalion task forces to converge on a single MEB objective, has terrain features that limit the ability to fire and maneuver in the study area. Specifically, dry lake beds and Amboy Road would impose limitations that would not occur in the western study area. The two battalion task forces would be funneled between the dry lake bed and the Sheephole Wilderness area. In addition to this restriction on operations, these battalion task forces would have to administratively cross Amboy Road at hardened crossings, which does not provide the best operational simulation of terrain conditions. Further, live-fire would have to be restricted in the east study area in order to safeguard civilian traffic on Amboy Road. (DEIS at 2-84)

The Preferred Alternative, as well as other study alternatives utilizing the west study area, however, are more desirable from an operational standpoint. Alternative 1, meets all of the optimal requirements and would not impose any training restrictions. The Preferred Alternative mitigates some of the environmental impacts of Alternative 1, and still provides a more desirable training area from an operational standpoint. The Preferred Alternative also allows for all three battalion task forces to converge on a single MEB objective. It does not have terrain restrictions such as dry lake beds or Amboy Road. Live-fire is also not restricted in order to protect civilian safety. The one training restriction Alternative 6 imposes—the limited use of dud-producing ordnance due to the restricted public access designation of a portion of the west study area—still meets the optimal requirements for MEB training. (*Id.*) As such, we agree that the Preferred Alternative is the best way to accomplish the Marine Corps training objectives as it not only takes the public into consideration, but also allows for a more optimal training scenario from an operational standpoint.

NEPA-1

Response to Comment 2311 (Page 2 of 6):

NEPA-1:

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2311 (Page 3 of 6)

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page 3

II. Impact on Transportation and Safety.

The east study area is the only area which considers the closure of a major road. Amboy Road is the principal route between Twentynine Palms, California and the Interstate 40 corridor to the north of the Combat Center. (Draft EIS at 2-85) Implementation of Alternative 3 would involve the closure of Amboy Road for two days out of the year. While signs could be put in place to advise the public of the closure of Amboy Road in advance, the complete road closure would be significant, as the general public could not access a route to Interstate 40 for more than 30 miles beyond Amboy Road. (Draft EIS at 4.6-6) In addition, tanks would cross Amboy Road as part of the training exercise. This would involve the installation of four concrete tank crossings over North Amboy Road which would be required to minimize the impacts to the roadway from the military vehicles. (Draft EIS at 4.4-14)

The Preferred Alternative would not restrict public access to any paved roads or traffic thoroughfares. (Draft EIS at 4.6-8) As the Preferred Alternative would not involve use of public roads, potential transportation impacts would primarily occur due to trespasser interference. (See Draft EIS at 4.4-7) Because these impacts can be mitigated, the potential impacts to safety based on transportation are greatly reduced as compared to Alternative 3.

In addition to impacts on Amboy Road and vehicular transportation, the east study area also contains railroad line crossings, increasing the risk of injuries or impacts related to ground transportation in the east study area. Railroad line crossings have the potential to occur during ground training activities, and these crossings may disrupt rail traffic or result in accidents between military vehicles and train cars. There is also the potential that ordnance may strike rail cars in transit during training activities. The Combat Center does not currently have a protocol to deal with these types of impacts, and would have to develop some standards if the east study area were acquired for the expansion of the Center. (Draft EIS at 4.4-14) Railroad lines are not present in the west study area, eliminating these potential transportation and safety related impacts from the Preferred Alternative.

III. Impact on Socioeconomics.

As we stated in our January 29, 2009 letter, Tetra's operations are an important part of the local economy. Tetra directly employs 22 people at its operations within the eastern study area, paying a total of \$775,000 in salary each year. Tetra also spends \$2,100,000 per year to ship and transfer its products, and spends \$3,800,000 per year in California to produce its products. Alternative 3 could require the closure of Tetra's operations, as well as the operations of other mines and agricultural lands in the area. (Draft EIS at 4.1-11)

TRN-1

SOC-1

Response to Comment 2311 (Page 3 of 6):

TRN-1:

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 4.6.4, transportation impacts under Alternative 3 would be significant, even with implementation of the potential mitigation measure listed. The EIS identified no significant impacts to transportation under all other action alternatives.

SOC-1:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, access to mining and other land holding will be determined on a case-by-case basis once an action alternative is selected (see Section 2.6 of the EIS for more information). Loss of future mining potential as it relates to implementation of Alternative 3, is addressed in Section 4.3.4.1 of the EIS.

Comment ID: 2311 (Page 4 of 6)

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page 4

The closure of mining operations in the east study area would be significant and inconsistent with the California Desert Conservation Area ("CDCA") Plan's multiple use objectives, which include provisions for mining access and approved permits allowing for the operation of Tetra's and National Chloride's mines in the east study area. Further, the BLM has assigned a Known Sodium Leasing Area (43 Code of Federal Regulations 2400) land classification to lands in the vicinity of the mines, indicating its intent to retain access to mineral resources without interference from other users. (Draft EIS at 4.1-11)

SOC-1

As such, adoption of Alternative 3 would create economic impacts due to the loss of mining production and the associated income that is the result of the production, transportation, and use of the sodium chloride product. Relocating these mines may be costly and potentially infeasible. Furthermore, preclusion of access to these mineral resources would result in adverse impacts on mining in the future. (Draft EIS at 4.1-12) In addition to the economic impacts, acquisition of the east study area would conflict with BLM policy, which recognizes the need to continue mining in the area without interference. Alternative 6 would avoid all of these impacts, as no active mines are present. (Draft EIS at 4.1-17)

Alternative 3 also creates fewer Combat Center jobs than the other considered alternatives. Due to the configuration of the land and training capabilities, Alternative 3 would create approximately 59 new jobs at the Combat Center. Alternative 3 would result in the loss of approximately 135 jobs as a result of displaced businesses. As such, Alternative 3 would result in a net loss in regional sales, income and employment. (Draft EIS at 4.3-17-18) Although this was found to be less than significant, the Preferred Alternative offers a combined increase in income due to the creation of additional Combat Center jobs. Specifically, the Preferred Alternative would create approximately 110 jobs and would realize a beneficial combined impact from a net gain in regional sales, income and employment. This personnel increase would offset any impacts due to the loss of recreational or film industry spending. Further, the area has the capacity to support any additional demand for housing or services. (Draft EIS at 4.3-27)

SOC-2

Alternative 3 has the potential to result in the loss of 135 jobs, while only creating 59 Combat Center jobs. Further, Alternative 3 could result in the loss of mining operations and associated revenues and property taxes. The impacts of Alternative 6 primarily concern recreation and film industry impacts. While the loss of a portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would result in some detrimental impacts on those industries, the Combat Center would realize an increase in 135 jobs. This increase in personnel and their families would increase spending in the area and overall, the impacts would be beneficial. Further, existing businesses in the east study area would

T226-001 -- 07/20/11

Response to Comment 2311 (Page 4 of 6):

SOC-2:

Comment noted.

Comment ID: 2311 (Page 5 of 6)

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page 5

be retained, further preserving revenue in the area. Because Alternative 6 would realize a net socioeconomic benefit, we concur in the determination that it is the Preferred Alternative.

SOC-2

IV. Impact on Air Quality.

Impacts to air quality can occur due to both construction activities as well as operations. Generally, all of the proposed alternatives would have similar air quality impacts, although Alternative 3 produces additional significant impacts to National Ambient Air Quality Standards (“NAAQS”). Because of these additional impacts, the Preferred Alternative and acquisition of the west study area is preferable to Alternative 3 from an Air Quality standpoint.

AQ-1

Construction activities under all alternatives would produce similar impacts. Operationally, however, Alternative 3 would generate more combusive and fugitive dust emissions from tactical vehicles and tactical support equipment due to vehicles needing to travel greater distances based on the location of the proposed assembly areas. (Draft EIS at 4.8-10) Implementation of Alternative 3 would result in greater PM<sub>10</sub> emissions, exceeding the NAAQS standard. Alternative 3 is the only alternative that would result in significant air quality impacts. Accordingly, we agree that Alternative 6 is preferable as both an operational alternative, and an environmental alternative.

V. Impact on Recreation.

There have been arguments that acquisition of the east study area should be the preferred alternative due to impacts on recreation should the Johnson Valley OHV Area be acquired, and there is concern that the Preferred Alternative would result in greater socioeconomic impacts due to the impact on OHV use and loss of income from businesses supporting OHV use and recreation. We agree with the findings in the Draft EIS that Alternative 6 mitigates these concerns by retaining public access to a large portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, namely, 82,802 usable acres, or approximately 44 percent of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, would be available for public recreation 10 months per year. (Draft EIS at 4.1-16)

REC-1

The Preferred Alternative maintains the Cougar Buttes, Anderson Dry Lake, and Soggy Dry Lack OHV staging and camping areas, as well as several popular OHV trails including Bullfrog, Cakewalk, Chicken Rock, and Hammerdown Trails for public use year round, and keeps the area available for other public activities such as hiking, picnicking, photography, geocaching, and wildlife and wildflower viewing. The restricted public access area also permits OHV use on 38,137 acres for ten months out of the year, and includes a major staging area, Means Dry Lake, as well as several

Y226-011 - 4/17/11

Response to Comment 2311 (Page 5 of 6):

**AQ-1:**

Comment noted.

**REC-1:**

Comment noted.

**Comment ID: 2311 (Page 6 of 6)**

Mr. Chris Proudfoot  
May 26, 2011  
Page 6

popular trails, including the "Hammer" trails. (Draft EIS at 4.2-19)

Thus, although Alternative 6, the Preferred Alternative, will result in the loss of a portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area, some of the most popular and unique trails and staging and camping areas are preserved either year round or within the restricted public access area. By preserving these areas, as well as maintaining public and private land used for mining and agriculture within the east study area, the Marine Corps is able to obtain an operationally feasible expansion area, preserve recreational opportunities, and reduce socioeconomic impacts due to loss of mining and recreational lands.

We agree with the Department of Navy's determination that Alternative 6 is the Preferred Alternative for the reasons stated above and appreciate the Department's consideration of our concerns expressed in our letter dated January 29, 2009. Please contact me should you have any questions or comments.

Very truly yours,



Amanda E. Schneider, for  
GRESHAM SAVAGE  
NOLAN & TILDEN,  
A Professional Corporation

AES:jmk

REC-1

GEN-2

**Response to Comment 2311 (Page 6 of 6):**

**GEN-2:**

Comment noted.

**Comment ID** 2312

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not take the Johnson Valley OHV area. The OHV areas around the greater Los Angeles area have a hard enough time supporting the many outdoor enthusiasts in this area. Thank you.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2313

**Last Name** Johnston

**First Name** David

**Comment** My Grandparents homesteaded our property in 1956 and still live there off of Ranch road on the south side of the base. I have grown up there and stayed out of trouble, Is it too much to ask for my children to have the same place and enviroment to grow up in? I dont think so... We are all about the military and take a huge amout of pride in them and our family members that serve and have served, and died for us and our country! But I do believe this base expansion is not needed! Thank You -David Johnston

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

|                              |                                                                                           |
|------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2314                                                                                      |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | MUNSON                                                                                    |
| <b>First Name</b>            | BETTY                                                                                     |
| <b>Comment</b>               | COMMENT ATTACHED SUBMITTED BY BETTY MUNSON,<br>SECRETARY                                  |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                                 |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the<br>attached letter. |

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 1 of 6)

From:  
Homestead Valley Community Council  
P.O Box 3694  
Landers, CA 92285

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 26, 2011

Re: 29Palms Base expansion Draft Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Sir:

The Homestead Valley Community Council (HVCC) is an organization made up of representatives from the community associations in Landers, Johnson Valley, Yucca Mesa and Flamingo Heights. These unincorporated communities are located along Hwy 247 in an area mapped in the San Bernardino County General Plan as the Homestead Valley.

The HVCC brings issues we have in common to local, county, state and federal officials. We undertake projects of benefit to citizens of the communities, and to the Marine Corps.

Our monthly meetings are regularly attended by representatives of the Fire Department, County Code Enforcement, and the Third Supervisorial District, as well as residents who bring us issues that need to be reported to any of these officials. The HVCC made a comment opposing the 29Palms Base expansion during the public scoping period.

See [www.hvccsite.org](http://www.hvccsite.org) for more information about the Council and the historic communities.

We know a lot of time and effort has been put into the DEIS, but we are highly disturbed by deficiencies in the document relating to studies of the effects of the proposed expansion of the 29Palms Base and the increase in training activities, and the lack of any mention of the Homestead Valley communities and their historic roots.

The DEIS states that potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed, including the impacts on cultural resources.

The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer ...would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

On Page 29 there is a Table showing Alternative 1, Cultural Resources, which states that less than significant impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.

CR-1

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 1 of 6):

CR-1, CR-2

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

NOI-1

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

SOC – 1

The EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 2 of 6)

It also states that Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources, and that there are no impacts anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and further on in the document for the other Alternatives.

However, this analysis is stated to be made WITHIN the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents.

This contradicts the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) listed on page 532, which include:  
-Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries

-Devaluation of surrounding private property.  
-Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.

All of these impacts would occur OUTSIDE the proposed expansion areas, and have major consequences to the Homestead Valley communities.

This contradiction in the DEIS must be corrected. The Homestead Valley communities are close neighbors to the Base and to the westward expansion area, and therefore must be included by name in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

These communities were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939, an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. This plan to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands directly led to the settlement of the Homestead Valley.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106, establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events. The Homestead Valley fulfills that criterion.

Because of the history of the four homestead communities, linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

"The stories of these intrepid homesteaders, their isolated cabins, their adjustments to the wild land and its wildlife, are preserved today in old newspapers, journals and tall and short tales.

"Wild as the life was, they still determined that a few 20th century amenities were necessary. These four communities grew,

and raised the funds, broke the grounds and established their community centers. They worked with the county to install road signs; they brought in water, electric, telephone and postal service.

"Today they work together under the banner of the HVCC to insure that county, state and federal officials are aware of their rural needs in the sprawling clamor of 21st century California  
-from the HVCC Brochure, "4 high desert settlements on a historic trail..."

The westward expansion area includes Means Dry Lake, site of the historic Means Well. This well was dug by workers from the Heart Bar Ranch which was active from the early 1900's till after World War II. Heart Bar grazed cattle herds all along Old Woman Springs Rd, a route now followed by Hwy 247. They also dug Ames Well and others now inside the Base boundaries.

CR-1

CR-2

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 2 of 6):

NEPA – 1

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS.

NEPA – 2

The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. Section 4.3 of the EIS explains that the Marine Corps considered potential socioeconomic mitigation measures but determined that none were feasible and that each alternative would result in less than significant unmitigable impacts.

CR-3

Comment noted.

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 3 of 6)

Their history is part of the history of the Homestead Valley, and all relics of it should be recognized in the DEIS.

-These historic homestead communities have existed as long as the Base has existed. However, noise and shock effects have increased in recent times. The DEIS says training exercises under each Alternative are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to state that the escalation of noise and vibration is recognized outside the study area. It must be reported as having significant socio-economic and environmental justice impacts on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will feel the effects of hours of live fire air-ground combat. The DEIS must recognize that even the announcement of the proposed expansion has impacted property sales, and if approved will adversely impact property values.

-Rural inconveniences are outweighed by open spaces and rural quiet to those who choose to live in these historic places. The DEIS must state that expansion will make properties in the Homestead Valley less desirable, causing financial hardship, and possible desolation.

The DEIS must be changed to address all impacts on the Homestead Valley as historic cultural resources, survivals of pioneer days in California.

Under all Alternatives the document must state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this. The preparers of the document were made aware during the scoping period that a large percentage of the property owners within the Homestead Valley use and love the Johnson Valley OHV area, not just as riders or racers, but as users of OHVs to get where they want to go to camp, rockhound, trail ride or simply experience the open desert.

The DEIS does not make it plain to the average reader the inadequacy of mitigation lands to replace OHV recreational areas removed from public access. There are not enough public lands in the California Desert Conservation Area to mitigate the proposed Base expansion. There certainly are no lands available in the vicinity of the Johnson Valley OHV area, contiguous to or accessible from the existing area.

Therefore there is no mitigation for the economic losses to the Homestead Valley (see below). There are no potential mitigation measures stated for Socio-economics, Cultural Resources and Environmental Justice in the Homestead Valley.

Therefore, because there is no discussion of how the issue of mitigation lands can be addressed, the document cannot meet NEPA requirements.

On Page 33, Table ES-3 states: Mitigation measures will be developed in consultation with SHPO, the Tribes and interested parties. In addition, the ICRMP would be modified and developed in consultation with SHPO and the Native American Tribes that have an interest in lands under the jurisdiction of the Marine Corps.

(To the reader feeling battered by an assault of initials, the fine print below the Table explains: SHPO=State Historic Preservation Officer ICRMP=Integrated Cultural Resource Plan) However, as the DEIS area does NOT include the Homestead Valley communities per se, it is not clear what mitigation measures, if any, will be considered for them. Stating mitigation measures will be developed in the future leaves no basis for judgement as to whether any mitigation measures are possible at all.

CR-2

NOI-1

SOC-1

NEPA-1

NEPA-2

CR-3

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 3 of 6):

**SOC-2**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Regional economic impact analysis includes analysis of county-wide impacts, to include Flamingo Heights.

**SOC-3**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be lost tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. Section 4.3 clearly identifies the expected decline in county and local sales tax revenue, for each action alternative.

**SOC-4**

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each action alternative. As noted in the EIS, Alternative 3 would be expected to lead to potential net job losses while Alternatives 1,2,4,5 and 6 would be expected to lead to potential net job increases. Estimates of changes in Net jobs are calculated on a county-wide basis.

**NEPA-3**

Comment noted.

**SOC-5**

Comment noted. The Marine Corps has not made a decision on what two months of the year that the RPAA would be closed to public use.

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 4 of 6)

Therefore, the DEIS must be changed to clarify and enumerate any mitigation measures, or state in words of one syllable, if you live next to us, you will be hurt.

CR-3

Minimization continues throughout the Socio-economic section of the document. The DEIS estimates revenue lost due to reduction in OHV visits in the Lucerne Valley area, an historic agricultural settlement that is a close neighbor of the Homestead Valley; it also mentions the Town of Yucca Valley. They are described as "the nearest communities with any appreciable retail and traveler services presence (though limited) that can support the purchasing needs of people visiting Johnson Valley." It is true that both have markets, fuel, restaurants and other services within a half-hour drive of the OHV area. But the DEIS is completely dismissing the presence of the commercial zone on Hwy 247 in Flamingo Heights that also enjoys a huge increase in business on the big weekends, and are even closer to the OHV area. These merchants and restaurants are very important to residents in the Homestead Valley. However, there is not enough local population to keep them in business. They rely heavily on travelers on Hwy 247.

SOC-2

What the DEIS does not report is that most grocery stores operate on a profit of 3 to 5 percent. Loss of 7 plus percent, as is stated for the Lucerne Valley Market and Hardware, almost guarantees closure of the business. The smaller businesses in the Homestead Valley also would be severely impacted. The document must be corrected to give the true picture of what the base expansion will do to these neighbors.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Yucca Mesa are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution all around and above their heads. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will increase these very significant impacts. There is a large percentage of residents who are too old, and in financial circumstances too restricted, to move away from the stress of noise and vibration. They face the possibility of an extra burden of traveling further for food and fuel if the businesses along Hwy 247 fail due to loss of revenues from decreasing numbers of new residents and visitors.

-The DEIS compares loss of property tax from acquired lands to total county dollars received from taxes, rather than make the comparison with other rural desert communities' tax dollars. Therefore the reader is completely misled as to the true magnitude of the loss. Not only should the comparison be between rural desert communities, the preparers do not address what those lost dollars have been supporting, and how that loss will impact these communities (i.e. waste management, library, park, county services, etc.) The seemingly small number of tax dollars may just mean the difference between a facility remaining open or closed, or services being provided or not. The county of San Bernardino is already undergoing severe budget cuts, due to economic conditions that did not exist when these expansion plans were initiated. Therefore the DEIS fails to accurately portray and evaluate impacts, and must be corrected to reflect real-time conditions, which are not forecast to change very soon.

SOC-3

-The DEIS estimates creation of 90 new jobs, of which about 77 will be on base and 13 off base. The DEIS states lost merchant jobs and dollars from reduced recreational opportunities are not significant and will likely be made up by the new jobs created and more Marines moving in and out of 29 Palms.

As most of the new jobs, if not all, are likely to be located in the city of 29 Palms (the base headquarters) the preparers of this DEIS have cruelly marginalized the impact of lost dollars on more distant communities in the Homestead Valley and beyond. The death or near death of small but historic desert communities near the Johnson Valley OHV Area has not been given due consideration. The redistribution of jobs and incomes from one part of the desert to another part of the desert has not been adequately portrayed or addressed. Neither has the redistribution of sales tax revenue.

SOC-4

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 4 of 6):

GEN-1

Comment noted.

GEN-2

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 5 of 6)

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 5 of 6):

Also the Force Structure Review of 2010 includes in its significant force structure changes a 13% reduction in civilian employees. Where this reduction will occur, and how many employees at MCAGCC will be affected is not clear. The document must address this reduction and spell out the difference it makes between the Draft estimates and the Final estimates of new jobs.

SOC-4

At any rate, the DEIS fails to give a true picture of the very significant impacts on the job market in the Homestead Valley, and it must be corrected.

The DEIS does say that under the Marines' preferred Alternative 6, access to and use of approximately 56% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be lost, representing a significant impact. It does acknowledge that the resource is unique to the region, given its combination of vast open space, large variety of desert views and scenic vistas, and unique geologic formations. It does not emphasize the region is considered unique to the entire country, and draws visitors from all over the world. 44% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be available for public recreation for an unspecified and possibly variable 10 months per year (for the portion acquired as Restricted Public Access area), or all of the year (for the area not acquired, which is the farthest west). It does acknowledge that the displacement of recreational users to the remaining portion of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would result in significant impacts to recreational resources in the west study area.

This brings us to the impact on the community next to the westward expansion area, less than five miles outside the study area.

NEPA-3

The unincorporated community of Johnson Valley lies directly south of what became the Johnson Valley OHV Area over 30 years ago. The Johnson Valley Improvement Association (JVIA) was founded 53 years ago for the benefit of the early homesteaders.

JVIA volunteers built, maintain and operate the Johnson Valley Community Center, which is the hub of social and educational activities in this isolated and widely scattered settlement. It also served as an emergency center after the 1992 earthquake. Three meals a day for over two weeks were served to all comers, and those who needed shelter found it there.

The DEIS does not specifically address impacts on the Johnson Valley community, although researchers for the document and other Marine representatives repeatedly visited during the scoping period. Several focus group meetings were held in the Johnson Valley Community Center building, overlooking the valley the Marines wish to close to public access. When the expansion plans were originally formed, the planners may not have known that citizens lived in Johnson Valley. But USMC representatives did come and meet them. They listened closely to the citizens' comments, and took copious notes. But as was feared, the overwhelming impact of the proposed actions on Johnson Valley is not reflected in the DEIS. To a reader in another part of the US who may know nothing about the California high desert and its history, the impacts are rated as less than significant, and therefore the document is misleading and must be corrected.

The HVCC strongly supports JVIA (a member association) in its efforts to make the Marines understand what this Base expansion would do. Of major concern, the Johnson Valley Community Center is largely supported in all its activities by the breakfast it serves each Saturday (cooked and served by volunteers) to the "weekenders" who own property in Johnson Valley, and the OHV visitors from across the highway.

SOC-5

Page 557, Table 4.3-13 shows the estimated loss of 24.6% in direct expenditures in the area if the preferred Alternative 6 is chosen. This will be even greater for the Community Center during the two or

Comment ID: 2314 (Page 6 of 6)

Response to Comment 2314 (Page 6 of 6):

more months the public would not be allowed access during training exercises. Those two months will be during Spring and Fall, avoiding the extremes of heat and cold the desert climate is noted for. These are also the months of largest attendance at the Saturday Breakfast. It is not unusual to serve 120+ guests on long weekends when the weather is good. It is not unusual to see that number dwindle to 40 in the high summertime.

SOC-5

Therefore the denial of public access to the remnant "shared use" area will inevitably reduce the numbers of guests at the Saturday Breakfast, as well as the number of potential property owners attracted to Johnson Valley. The loss of Saturday Breakfast revenues will inevitably jeopardize the future of the JVIA and of the Community Center.

Therefore, the DEIS must be corrected to make it very clear to even the most cursory of readers that the economy, and very existence of Johnson Valley, and indeed the viability of all the historic Homestead Valley communities, are threatened under all Alternatives except #3, due to the closure or partial denial of public access to the Johnson Valley OHV area. The noise and other effects of increased and intensified training exercises under Alternative #3 also threaten these communities. It must also state that these impacts were not properly presented in the draft document.

GEN-1

The HVCC also strongly urges an extension of the May 26 public comment period, as there are many citizens who are only now learning about the proposed Base expansion, and need more time to go into this enormous document in detail. There was also confusion as to the correct address to send comments. In order to preserve their good relations with their neighbors, the Marines should grant this extension.

GEN-2

Sincerely,

James Harvey,  
President HVCC

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                 |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2315                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Nuaimi                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Mark                                                                                                                                                                            |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please find a letter from the Town of Yucca Valley regarding the proposed expansion project. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact us at your convenience. |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.                                                                                          |

Comment ID: 2315 (Page 1 of 4)



May 25, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

**RE: DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT  
LAND ACQUISITION/AIRSPACE EASEMENT ACQUISITION**

Project Manager:

The Town of Yucca Valley recognizes the importance and mission of the 29 Palms Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center and appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project.

The Town of Yucca Valley has identified a number of issues and concerns that would result from the implementation of Alternative 6 as identified in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment.

**JOHNSON VALLEY OFF HIGHWAY VEHICLE (OHV) AREA:**  
The Town of Yucca Valley is opposed to the proposed Combat Center expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Area and finds that the Draft EIS does not adequately address the local economic impacts of any of the alternatives contained within the Draft EIS.

Implementation of the Alternative #6 would permanently remove 108,530 acres from public recreation use from the Johnson Valley OHV Area. An additional 38,137 acres would be removed from public recreation use for approximately 60 days annually. These 38,137 acres would allow public recreation access under the Combat Center's direction the remaining 10 months of the year. Further, the acreage impacted in Alternative #6 affects some of the more popular of the OHV destinations, including the Hammers Trails and the King of the Hammers event, and would likely impact attendance to a greater extent than the model estimates.

The Johnson Valley OHV Area plays a critical role in providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the residents of Yucca Valley and the Morongo Basin. The Johnson Valley OHV Area also serves the southern California region and is crucial recreation infrastructure for outdoor enthusiasts.

Planning (760) 369-6575  
Public Works (760) 369-6579  
Building and Safety (760) 365-0089  
Ezale Compliance (760) 369-6575  
Engineering (760) 369-6575  
Animal Control (760) 369-7291  
H&S (760) 228-0894

**The Town of Yucca Valley**  
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT/PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT  
58928 Business Center Dr.  
Yucca Valley, California 92284

SOC-1

Response to Comment 2315 (Page 1 of 4):

SOC-1:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The best available information for OHV recreational spending patterns was identified and used as the basis for the analysis. The Kroeger and Manalo 2007 study provided information for Southern California OHV recreational spending. The dollar amounts were adjusted to 2015 dollars.

Comment ID: 2315 (Page 2 of 4)

Response to Comment 2315 (Page 2 of 4):

As identified in the Draft EIS, California had, on average, the highest number of OHV participants in the country, with 4.99 million OHV users accounting for 11.6% of the U.S. Total (3.2-13, 1999-2007). From 1980 to 2000, California OHV registrations increased 108%, with attendance at California's State Vehicular Recreation Areas increased 52% between 1985 and 2000 (3.2-12). But between 1980 and 2000, the number of acres available for OHV use in California deserts has decreased by 48%, from 13.5 million acres to 7 million acres.

The Johnson Valley OHV Area serves an estimated number of visitors ranging from 350,000 (estimate used in EIS analysis) to as many as 800,000 users annually (estimate from OHV sources). The Draft EIS economic impact analysis relied upon a regional economic model prepared by the US Army, referred to as the Economic Impact Forecast System (EIFS). The results generated by the EIFS model are based upon assumptions without detailed data to support those assumptions. While the EIFS model projects a positive economic impact to the region, the model uses multiplier effects that are not valid in the rural, desert community. As such, the EIFS modeling effort does not adequately evaluate or identify economic impacts to Yucca Valley or the Morongo Basin from the loss of a majority of the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

The following summary is taken from the EIS.

*Very limited data are available to help quantify the severity of the impact to Lucerne Valley businesses. There are no known data to identify the relative proportions of Johnson Valley-related recreational and film industry sales that accrue to Lucerne Valley, Yucca Valley, Apple Valley, or any other communities within the local area. Based on their locations relative to the two main routes used to travel to Johnson Valley, it could be assumed that Lucerne Valley and Yucca Valley together benefit from the majority of the "local" spending from Johnson Valley visits. Yucca Valley is a much larger town with more services and vendors, but Lucerne Valley is well situated relative to visitor traffic from areas like Victorville, Barstow, etc. The U.S. Census Bureau's (USCB's) 2007 economic census reports include data for Yucca Valley, Apple Valley, and other major cities/places in the area, but do not include data for Lucerne Valley. As an indication of the relative impact of reduced sales, the estimated \$3.6 million reduction in local spending due to Alternative 1, if displaced exclusively from Yucca Valley sales, would represent only 1.7% of the town's sales (\$207 million) in the relevant retail trade and accommodation/food services (4.3-8).*

*Impacts to communities in the vicinity of the acquisition study areas would be similar to those described for Alternative 1, except that such impacts would be somewhat reduced in scope and scale under Alternative 6. Businesses that rely on tourism and film industry spending would need to plan ahead for reduced revenues during the two one-month periods of each year that no public use would occur and for some reduction in use compared to current levels during other times of the year. This would likely present some new challenges to*

SOC-1

SOC-2

Comment ID: 2315 (Page 3 of 4)

*individual businesses, but tourism-based businesses are often seasonal in nature, and other sources of tourism revenues in the area (travelers to Big Bear or Joshua Tree National Park for example) would not be affected by the action. Since the impact for Alternative 1 was considered to be less than significant, the smaller Alternative 6 impact to individual communities in the area would also be less than significant.*

As identified in the Draft EIS, the local economy will be significantly negatively impacted by the reduction in acreage available in the Johnson Valley OHV Area. If the number of visitors is underestimated (as many believe), those effects are further amplified.

**AIRSPACE MODIFICATIONS, JOHNSON VALLEY MOA:**

EIS Preferred Alternative #6 proposes to establish the Johnson Valley Military Operational Area (MOA), a defined airspace with flight restrictions, in close proximity to Yucca Valley. This MOA would affect local airspace navigation for pilots utilizing the Yucca Valley Airport when the MOA restrictions are in effect. The recommended flight restriction of the Johnson Valley MOA would establish a maximum flight altitude of 1,500' Above Ground Level (AGL) when the MOA is in effect. Precise maps have not been available in order to determine precise locations of the MOA. Due to terrain and typical flight patterns, the restriction to FL 1,500 AGL creates difficulties for the private pilots, at times, in the Morongo Basin. Any proposed amendments to Military Operational Areas related to expansion of the Combat Center should establish a FL of 3,000 AGL in proximity to the Yucca Valley Airport.

**AIRCRAFT RELATED NOISE**

As identified in the Draft EIS, As described in Section 4.9.7, Noise, the 65 dB CNEL noise contour for airfield-related activities and the 65 dB CNELmr contour for airspace-related activities in current and proposed airspace, would be fully contained within the proposed boundaries of the Combat Center under Alternative 6. Therefore, no individuals outside the installation would be exposed to CNEL or CNELmr greater than or equal to 65 dB from airfield-related or airspace-related noise. However, because the public would be afforded restricted public access within the proposed RPAA, some visitors to the RPAA would potentially be exposed to high single-event noise levels emitted by low flying aircraft. Such over flights would not occur consistently over any one location and would be unlikely to affect the same individuals with sufficient intensity or frequency to represent anything more than a periodic annoyance. Aircraft-related noise associated with implementation of Alternative 6 would have less than significant impacts to public health.

The creation of the Johnson Valley MOA expands flight training airspace to the Yucca Valley area. As such, the potential for exposure of sensitive noise receptors to unacceptable noise levels is very likely with the creation of the Johnson Valley MOA. While planned flight training activities as identified in the

SOC-2

AIR-1

NOI-1

Response to Comment 2315 (Page 3 of 4):

**SOC-2:**

The EIS acknowledges incomplete or unavailable information with respect to visitor usage of the Johnson Valley OHV area, therefore, in accordance with CEQ regulations the Marine Corps conducted interviews with BLM and other key organizations and stakeholders to obtain reliable data and assumptions on annual visitor-days of use. The Marine Corps worked closely with BLM to develop reasonable assumptions for estimated loss of visitor-days of use from Johnson Valley as described under each action alternative. These assumptions were approved by BLM staff knowledgeable about and responsible for recreation management of the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

**AIR-1:**

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of the affected airspace with respect to the local aviation community and the EIS concludes that the acquisition of airspace proposed for each alternative would cause a significant impact to airspace. As indicated in the Draft EIS, no airspace decision has been or would be made before complete environmental review and consultation with the FAA, other stakeholders, and the public. The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the FAA in regards to the proposed airspace. Airspace dimensions, altitudes, and times required may change as this cooperative effort is conducted. Please refer to Section 1.5.3.2 for information on the FAA airspace proposal process.

Comment ID: 2315 (Page 4 of 4)

Draft EIS illustrate that acceptable noise levels will not be exceeded, the DRAFT EIS does not take into account unanticipated flight pattern deviations that may be necessary or unavoidable during flight training exercises. The Town of Yucca Valley is concerned that the potential for flight pattern deviations from those training patterns identified in the Draft EIS, as well as future modification and expansion of flight training maneuvers, will expose sensitive noise receptors to unacceptable noise levels.

NOI-1

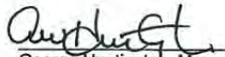
**SUMMARY:**

The Town of Yucca Valley recognizes the importance and mission of the 29 Palms Marine Corp Air Ground Combat Center, its importance to the community and to the Morongo Basin, and appreciates the opportunity to comment on the above referenced project.

GEN-1

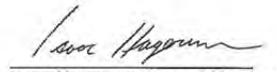
As currently drafted, the Town of Yucca Valley finds that the Draft EIS does not adequately address the economic impacts to the Town, the Morongo Basin, and to the region caused by the significant reduction in acreage and usability of the Johnson Valley OHV Area; negatively impacts private aviation flight patterns within the Morongo Basin; and creates the potential for unacceptable noise impacts to sensitive receptors.

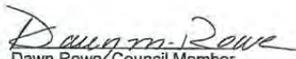
Sincerely,

  
George Huntington, Mayor

  
Frank Luckino, Mayor Pro Tem

  
Merl Abel, Council Member

  
Isaac Hagerman, Council Member

  
Dawn Rowe, Council Member

Response to Comment 2315 (Page 4 of 4):

**NOI-1:**

It is standard procedure for pilots to avoid flights over towns and other noise sensitive areas that are briefed to pilots and noted in their local flight procedures. Flights over such areas should not occur unless a pilot is required to do so due to an emergency or other such precautionary condition. Please contact the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center at Twentynine Palms if you observe any aircraft flights over Yucca Valley that you consider to be a deviation from what is presented in the EIS.

**GEN-1:**

Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2316                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | MUNSON                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>First Name</b>            | BETTY                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Comment</b>               | <p>5.3.2.9 Senate Bill (SB) 2921: California Desert Protection Act of 2010 Number 1) this bill never got out of committee. Vigorous opposition was expressed to Senator Feinstein both before and after its introduction, by Homestead Valley residents and other neighbors of the Base. The "protection" of the desert by further closures of public lands far outweighed any "protection" of recreation promised by this bill. Five areas designated decades ago as off-highway recreation areas were given "permanent" designation. The largest "equal in space to all the others combined" was Johnson Valley, and only the areas the Marines did not want were to be designated as "permanent." Number 2) a similar bill (S 138) was introduced in 2011. Off-road recreation has the least emphasis and is included to convince off-road enthusiasts that the bill should be supported. It is NOT supported, as Johnson Valley is the premier open recreation area in the country, and westward expansion of the Marine Base will leave only remnants for public access. All mentions of this bill in the DEIS must be deleted, as they are misleading as to the effects of the Marine base expansion westward, on recreation, on Johnson Valley, on the surrounding communities who suffer loss of revenue with loss of OHV visitors, and on other recreational areas in the state which will have increased safety problems brought on by overcrowding. Thank you, Betty Munson</p> |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The discussion of SB 2921 and the California Desert Protection Act of 2010 was discussed in the context of cumulative projects and is not presented as mitigation to the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2317

**Last Name** Holloway

**First Name** John

**Comment** Dear Sirs, My son wrote you earlier in regards to my property. I realize the deadline is today and I am very much concerned with the base expansion being so close to my property. I own two homes. The addresses are 1065 Ranch Road., 29 Palms, CA 92777 and 75150 Larkspur Rd., 29 Palms, CA 92277. They are within 200 feet of each other. As my son, Jack Holloway, wrote you earlier, our family has been visiting and occasionally living here for over 50 years My sister Shirley and Larry Johnston currently live just down the street. We believe the current base boundaries are adequate in our area. Currently the base boundaries are approximately 1 to 2 miles north of our homes. The proposed base boundaries are way too close to our homes. They are approximately 300 feet from our homes. The noise will be deafening and the noise modeling does not address the impacts of modern weaponry used so close to our homes. Again, the current boundaries are adequate. To keep the boundaries where they are currently will only be a minor adjustment in your proposal. My wife and I, and my son's family planned on moving to these homes and enjoying our retirement. We do not feel an adequate study as been completed in regards to the impact. I have forwarded my concerns to other family members and collectively we would like the DEIS to address our concerns. Here is what we would like addressed: The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) fails to adequately consider and analyze the socioeconomic and environmental justice impacts to the property owners and residents near the proposed southern boundary expansion area. The DEIS must also fully and adequately consider the short-term and long-term impacts to housing in the area immediately adjacent to and in the vicinity of the proposed southern boundary realignment. To correct for this shortcoming, the DEIS must provide additional analysis to address the circumstance explained above and for other similar situations. In addition, several of our properties were homesteaded and we believe this fact should be included in the DEIS and carefully considered. Are these areas protected?

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, property values are not anticipated to decrease directly or indirectly from impacts of the proposed action. However, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

In accordance with EO 12898 Criteria 1 and 2 for assessing environmental justice impacts, no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice (please see section 4.3).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2318

**Last Name** Bargman

**First Name** Jeanne

**Comment** more time is needed for the review process

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day

public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

**Comment ID** 2319

**Last Name** Holloway

**First Name** John

**Comment** I sent you an email a minute ago and forgot to add my address. Please attach this address to my previous comment that is linked to fyrduty@aol.com. Thanks, John Holloway

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As requested your email address has been added to your previous comment (Comment ID 2317).

**Comment ID** 2320

**Last Name** Anderson

**First Name** Ileene

**Comment** Please find attached the Center for Biological Diversity's comments on the proposed land expansion for MCAGCC 29 Palms. I will also be sending a hardcopy with the references on a CD today. Thanks very much for the opportunity to submit these comments. Ileene Anderson

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

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CENTER for BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY

*protecting and restoring natural ecosystems and imperiled species through  
science, education, policy, and environmental law*

*Submitted via Website, Electronically and by Fed Ex*

May 26, 2011

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**RE: Comments on the Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA (76 FR 10584)**

To whom it concerns:

These comments are submitted on behalf of the Center for Biological Diversity's 320,000 staff, members and on-line activists throughout the western states, regarding the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA (76 FR 10584), issued by the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA.

As proposed, the preferred alternative (Alternative 6) would expand military training into 21,304 acres in the southern expansion area, 146,667 acres in the western expansion of which 38,137 acres would be shared intermittently with off-road vehicle enthusiasts and the remaining 108,530 acres would be used exclusively by the Marine Corps for a total expansion area of 167,971 acres. These Mojave desert lands provide habitat for many species including the threatened desert tortoise. The DEIS for the proposed expansion fails to provide adequate identification and analysis of all of the significant impacts of the proposed project on the desert tortoise, bighorn sheep, golden eagles, and other rare plants, animals and vegetation communities including all Unusual Plant Assemblages (UPAs), and other biological resources. The DEIS also fails to adequately address the significant cumulative impacts of the project; fails to present a clear need for the expansion and lacks consideration of a reasonable range of alternatives.

Of particular concern is the DEIS' failure to include adequate information regarding the impacts to resources and the failure to fully examine the impact of the proposed expansion along with proposed plan amendments to the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan from other projects that cumulatively will result in military and industrial areas sprawling across the

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Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: N-18664. Please see response provided for that comment.

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California Desert within habitat that should be protected to achieve the goals of bioregional plans and endangered species recovery

In the sections that follow, the Center provides detailed comments on the ways in which the DEIS fails to adequately identify and analyze many of the impacts that could result from the proposed expansion, including but not limited to: impacts to biological resources, direct and indirect impacts, and cumulative impacts.

**I. The DEIS Fails to Comply with NEPA.**

NEPA is the “basic charter for protection of the environment.” 40 C.F.R. § 1500.1(a). In NEPA, Congress declared a national policy of “creat[ing] and maintain[ing] conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony.” *Or. Natural Desert Ass’n v. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 531 F.3d 1114, 1120 (9th Cir. 2008) (quoting 42 U.S.C. § 4331(a)). NEPA is intended to “ensure that [federal agencies] ... will have detailed information concerning significant environmental impacts” and “guarantee[] that the relevant information will be made available to the larger [public] audience.” *Blue Mountains Biodiversity Project v. Blackwood*, 161 F.3d 1208, 1212 (9th Cir. 1998).

Under NEPA, before a federal agency takes a “major [federal action] significantly affecting the quality’ of the environment,” the agency must prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS). *Kern v. U.S. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 284 F.3d 1062, 1067 (9th Cir. 2002) (quoting 43 U.S.C. § 4332(2)(C)). “An EIS is a thorough analysis of the potential environmental impact that ‘provide[s] full and fair discussion of significant environmental impacts and ... inform[s] decisionmakers and the public of the reasonable alternatives which would avoid or minimize adverse impacts or enhance the quality of the human environment.’” *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. Bureau of Land Mgmt.*, 387 F.3d 989, 993 (9th Cir. 2004) (citing 40 C.F.R. § 1502.1). An EIS is NEPA’s “chief tool” and is “designed as an ‘action-forcing device to [e]nsure that the policies and goals defined in the Act are infused into the ongoing programs and actions of the Federal Government.’” *Or. Natural Desert Ass’n*, 531 F.3d at 1121 (quoting 40 C.F.R. § 1502.1).

An EIS must identify and analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the proposed action. This requires more than “general statements about possible effects and some risk” or simply conclusory statements regarding the impacts of a project. *Klamath Siskiyou Wildlands Center v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995 (9th Cir. 2004) (citation omitted); *Oregon Natural Resources Council v. BLM*, 470 F.3d 818, 822-23 (9th Cir. 2006). Conclusory statements alone “do not equip a decisionmaker to make an informed decision about alternative courses of action or a court to review the Secretary’s reasoning.” *NRDC v. Hodel*, 865 F.2d 288, 298 (D.C. Cir. 1988).

NEPA also requires the DEIS to ensure the scientific integrity and accuracy of the information used in its decision-making. 40 CFR § 1502.24. The regulations specify that the agency “must insure that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and before actions are taken. The information must be of high quality. Accurate scientific analysis, expert agency comments, and public scrutiny are essential.”

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40C.F.R. §1500.1(b). Where there is incomplete information that is relevant to the reasonably foreseeable impacts of a project and essential for a reasoned choice among alternatives, the Marines must obtain that information unless the costs of doing so would be exorbitant or the means of obtaining the information are unknown. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22. Here the costs are reasonable to obtain information needed to complete the analysis and the DEIS must provide additional information—through a supplement or revised EIS. Even in those instances where complete data is unavailable, the EIS also must contain an analysis of the worst-case scenario resulting from the proposed project. *Friends of Endangered Species v. Jantzen*, 760 F.3d 976, 988 (9th Cir. 1985) (NEPA requires a worst case analysis when information relevant to impacts is essential and not known and the costs of obtaining the information are exorbitant or the means of obtaining it are not known) citing *Save our Ecosystems v. Clark*, 747 F.2d 1240, 1243 (9th Cir. 1984); 40 C.F.R. § 1502.22.

***A. Purpose And Need and Project Description are Too Narrowly Construed and Unlawfully Segment the Analysis***

Agencies cannot narrow the purpose and need statement to fit only the proposed project and then shape their findings to approve that project without a “hard look” at the environmental consequences. To do so would allow an agency to circumvent environmental laws by simply “going-through-the-motions.” It is well established that NEPA review cannot be “used to rationalize or justify decisions already made.” 40 C.F.R. § 1502.5; *Metcalf v. Daley*, 214 F.3d 1135, 1141-42 (9th Cir. 2000) (“the comprehensive ‘hard look’ mandated by Congress and required by the statute must be timely, and it must be taken objectively and in good faith, not as an exercise in form over substance, and not as a subterfuge designed to rationalize a decision already made.”) As Ninth Circuit noted an “agency cannot define its objectives in unreasonably narrow terms.” *City of Carmel-by-the-Sea v. U.S. Dept. of Transportation*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1155 (9th Cir. 1997); *Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F. 3d 900, 812 (9th Cir. 1999). The statement of purpose and alternatives are closely linked since “the stated goal of a project necessarily dictates the range of ‘reasonable’ alternatives.” *City of Carmel*, 123 F.3d at 1155. The Ninth Circuit recently reaffirmed this point in *National Parks Conservation Assn v. BLM*, 586 F.3d 735, 746-48 (9th Cir. 2009) (holding that “[a]s a result of [an] unreasonably narrow purpose and need statement, the BLM necessarily considered an unreasonably narrow range of alternatives” in violation of NEPA).

The purpose behind the requirement that the purpose and need statement not be unreasonably narrow, and NEPA in general is, in large part, to “guarantee[ ] that the relevant information will be made available to the larger audience that may also play a role in both the decision-making process and the implementation of that decision.” *Robertson v. Methow Valley Citizens Council*, 490 U.S. 332, 349 (1989). The agency cannot camouflage its analysis or avoid robust public input, because “the very purpose of a draft and the ensuing comment period is to elicit suggestions and criticisms to enhance the proposed project.” *City of Carmel-by-the-Sea*, 123 F.3d at 1156. The agency cannot circumvent relevant public input by narrowing the purpose and need so that no alternatives can be meaningfully explored or by failing to review a reasonable range of alternatives.

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The DEIS' purpose and need for the proposed expansion is "to fulfill the Marine Corps' requirement to provide sustained, combined-arms, live-fire, and maneuver field training for MEB-sized MAGTFs... MEBs must be able to conduct maneuver-intensive operations over extended distances, supported by closely coordinated precision fires, aviation-delivered ordnance, and sustained, focused logistical support... The Marine Corps needs the proposed action because existing facilities, ranges, and live-fire ground and air maneuver areas are inadequate to support the requirement for MEB-sized training exercises." (DEIS at 1-4). The DEIS' purpose and need is very narrowly construed to the proposed expansion areas. The purpose and need provided in the DEIS is impermissibly narrow under NEPA for several reasons, most importantly because it forecloses meaningful alternatives review in the DEIS. Because the purpose and need and the alternatives analysis are at the "heart" of NEPA review and affect nearly all other aspects of the EIS, on this basis and others, agency must revise and re-circulate the DEIS.

*B. The DEIS Does Not Adequately Describe Environmental Baseline*

DEIS is required to "describe the environment of the areas to be affected or created by the alternatives under consideration." 40 CFR § 1502.15. The establishment of the baseline conditions of the affected environment is a practical requirement of the NEPA process. In *Half Moon Bay Fisherman's Marketing Ass'n v. Carlucci*, 857 F.2d 505, 510 (9th Cir. 1988), the Ninth Circuit states that "without establishing . . . baseline conditions . . . there is simply no way to determine what effect [an action] will have on the environment, and consequently, no way to comply with NEPA." Similarly, without a clear understanding of the current status of these public lands BLM cannot make a rational decision regarding proposed project. See *Center for Biological Diversity v. U.S. Bureau of Land Management, et al.*, 422 F. Supp. 2d 1115, 1166-68 (N.D. Cal. 2006) (holding that it was arbitrary and capricious for BLM to approve a project based on outdated and inaccurate information regarding biological resources found on public lands).

The DEIS fails to provide adequate baseline information and description of the environmental setting in many areas including in particular the status of rare plants, animals and communities including desert tortoise, golden eagles, rare plants, and sand transport corridors.

The baseline descriptions in the DEIS are inadequate particularly for the areas where surveys were a single season, a day, or not performed at all. As discussed below, because of the deficiencies of the baseline data for the proposed project area, the DEIS fails to adequately describe the environmental baseline. Many of the rare and common but essential species and habitats have incomplete and/or vague on-site descriptions that make determining the proposed project's impacts difficult at best. Some of the rare species/habitats baseline conditions are totally absent and as a result no impact assessment is provided either. A supplemental document is required to fully identify the baseline conditions of the site, and that baseline needs to be used to evaluate the impacts of the proposed project.

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*C. Failure to Identify and Analyze Direct and Indirect Impacts to Biological Resources*

The EIS fails to adequately analyze the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project on the environment. The Ninth Circuit has made clear that NEPA requires agencies to take a “hard look” at the effects of proposed actions; a cursory review of environmental impacts will not stand. *Idaho Sporting Congress v. Thomas*, 137 F.3d 1146, 1150-52, 1154 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1998). Where the DEIS has incomplete or insufficient information, NEPA requires the agency to do the necessary work to obtain it where possible. 40 C.F.R. §1502.22; see *National Parks & Conservation Ass’n v. Babbitt*, 241 F.3d 722, 733 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2001) (“lack of knowledge does not excuse the preparation of an EIS; rather it requires [the agency] to do the necessary work to obtain it.”)

Moreover, the DEIS must look at reasonable mitigation measures to avoid impacts but failed to do so here. Even in those cases where the extent of impacts may be somewhat uncertain due to the complexity of the issues, the DEIS is not relieved of its responsibility under NEPA to discuss mitigation of reasonably likely impacts at the outset. Even if the discussion may of necessity be tentative or contingent, NEPA requires that the DEIS provide some information regarding whether significant impacts could be avoided. *South Fork Band Council of Western Shoshone v. DOI*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2009).

The lack of comprehensive surveys is particularly problematic (DEIS at 4.10-2). Failure to conduct sufficient surveys prior to the implementation of the project also effectively eliminates the most important function of surveys - using the information from the surveys to avoid and minimize harm caused by the project and reduce the need for mitigation. Often efforts to mitigate harm are far less effective than avoiding and preventing the harm in the first place. In addition, without understanding the scope of harm before it occurs, it is difficult to quantify an appropriate amount and type of mitigation.

The DEIS fails to provide all of the information necessary for decisionmakers and the public to adequately review the proposed project. Therefore the impacts cannot be fully analyzed or mitigated appropriately or fully. For this reason alone, a supplemental or revised DEIS needs to be provided and additional alternatives are included (including a preferred alternative) that avoids and reduces the impacts to biological resources.

With regards to transplantation and relocation, the ISA state that “In general, moving organisms from one area to another—for example, out of an impact area into a reserve area—is not a successful conservation action and may do more harm than good to conserved populations by spreading diseases, stressing resident animals, increasing mortality, and decreasing reproduction and genetic diversity. Transplantation or translocations should be considered a last recourse for unavoidable impacts, should never be considered full mitigation for the impact, and in all cases must be treated as experiments subject to long-term monitoring and management.” (at pg. Vii – Executive Summary). Clearly the DEIS fails to consider the impacts of moving both plants and animals from the project site onto adjacent areas. As discussed below the DEIS fails to evaluate the impacts of any of the translocated species on resident species and habitat – at

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a minimum, carrying capacity (the ability of the habitat to support species) of the landscape where species area proposed to be moved needs to be included

1. *Desert Tortoise*

The desert tortoise has lived in the western deserts for tens of thousands of years. In the 1970's their populations were noted to decline. Subsequently, the species was listed as threatened by the State of California in 1989 and by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in 1990, which then issued a Recovery Plan for the tortoise in 1994. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is in the process of updating the Recovery Plan, and a Draft Updated Recovery Plan was issued in 2008, however it has not been finalized to date. Current data indicate a continued decline across the range of the listed species<sup>1</sup> despite its protected status and recovery actions.

The original and draft Updated Recovery Plans both recognize uniqueness in desert tortoise populations in California. This particular subpopulation of tortoise at the proposed project site is part of the West Mojave Recovery unit<sup>2</sup>. Recent population genetics studies<sup>3</sup> have added to the 1994 Recovery Plan conclusions – not only is the West Mojave Recovery unit unique, within it, there are further genetically unique populations that may indeed require recognition of additional recovery unit subdivisions in the larger West Mojave Recovery Unit. While the proposed project site may have varying desert tortoise densities, this particular recovery unit has also been documented to have a 23% decline in population between 2005 and 2007<sup>4</sup>. The DEIS fails to identify and consider the localized impact from the proposed action to this recovery unit that is already in steep decline.

Currently, up to approximately 3,000 desert tortoises have been estimated to live within the boundaries of the preferred alternative's expansion areas (DEIS at 4.10-47). The DEIS states that the preferred alternative would "result in the take from military training (through death or being moved out of harm's way) of between 154 and 714 adult tortoises over the life of the project (121 to 189 in the acquisition study areas)" (DEIS at 4.10-47). However the assumptions (see below discussion) are so unclear that the proposed estimates appear to be speculative at best. It also fails to take into account "take" for juveniles and eggs, despite the fact that these life stages are essential for preventing further declines in desert tortoise populations. These life stages have been estimated for other proposed projects and should be included in the evaluation of impacts to the desert tortoise, because they most certainly will be affected by the proposed project. Regardless, we agree with the DEIS in the determination that the impact to the federally threatened desert tortoise from the preferred Alternative 6 is significant (DEIS at 4.10-49)

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[http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert\\_tortoise/documents/reports/2007\\_Rangewide\\_Desert\\_Tortoise\\_Population\\_Monitoring.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/documents/reports/2007_Rangewide_Desert_Tortoise_Population_Monitoring.pdf)  
2 [http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery\\_plans/1994/040628.pdf](http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plans/1994/040628.pdf)  
3 Murphy et al. 2007  
4  
[http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert\\_tortoise/documents/reports/2007\\_Rangewide\\_Desert\\_Tortoise\\_Population\\_Monitoring.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/documents/reports/2007_Rangewide_Desert_Tortoise_Population_Monitoring.pdf)

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While the DEIS references the Biological Assessment for the desert tortoise that includes the potential adverse effects and provides the web link to it (DEIS at 3.10-2), we could not find the Biological Assessment on the site.

The DEIS inappropriately assigns “take” percentage for desert tortoise based on the intensity of disturbance. For example “take” in the “high intensity areas” is presumed to be 50% (DEIS at 4.10-3). It is unclear what this assumption is based on (documented mortality from on-base research?). Additionally, the interval for the “take” is unclear and consequential – is that 50% per year? Over the life of the project? For each military training event? These basic issues need to be clarified in a supplemental EIS.

The DEIS fails to provide any actual mitigation strategy for impacts to desert tortoise. Because the action will be impacting occupied desert tortoise habitat and “take” will occur of desert tortoise, the agency needs to identify the amount and location of desert tortoise habitat that will be acquired and preserved in perpetuity as mitigation for the impacts that will occur to the desert tortoise within the expansion areas. This strategy has been implemented by other Department of Defense expansions and is requisite for this project. In addition to acquisition, other strategies that benefit the conservation of desert tortoise should also be implemented as identified in the current Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan<sup>5</sup> (1994). The DEIS is woefully inadequate with regards to this aspect of desert tortoise impact and mitigation. The supplemental DEIS must include these important issues.

Mitigation acquisition should include appropriate tortoise habitat (occupied or unoccupied) which is currently existing and providing benefits to the species, to off-set the elimination of the proposed expansion area. However, this strategy is still a *net loss of habitat* to the desert tortoise, as currently they are using or could use both the mitigation site and the proposed expansion area. Therefore, in order to aid in recovery of this declining species, at a minimum a 5:1 mitigation ratio should be required as mitigation for the elimination of occupied desert tortoise habitat in the proposed expansion area.<sup>6</sup>

The DEIS also fails to evaluate the potential off-site impacts to desert tortoise that will result from the proposed expansion displacing off-road vehicle (ORV) from the Johnson Valley open area. It is likely that ORV use will be concentrated in the remaining Johnson Valley ORV area (or other nearby ORV open areas) further impacting the existing desert tortoise populations in those areas. Recognition of the increase in illegal ORV activities must also be considered. The agency could offset some of the impact by providing SIGNIFICANTLY increased law enforcement resources to land management agencies in the region to help enforce land management rules and regulations especially in Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) and wilderness areas, which are key in recovering desert tortoise populations. This type of “mitigation” has been implemented by the Fort Irwin Expansion, where additional law enforcement was provided to the BLM. In that case however, the expansion was not in an ORV open area. In this case, significantly more law enforcement resources would be necessary to control potential illegal uses in adjacent sensitive areas.

<sup>5</sup> [http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery\\_plans/1994/940628.pdf](http://ecos.fws.gov/docs/recovery_plans/1994/940628.pdf)

<sup>6</sup> Moilanen et al 2009, Norton 2008

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The DEIS fails to provide details on relocation of desert tortoise “out of harm’s way”. Typically a translocation and relocation plan is provided for public review, but it is missing from the DEIS. Recently a panel of Independent Science Advisors (ISA) was convened to make recommendations<sup>7</sup> for species conservation as part of the proposed Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan. The ISA state that “In general, moving organisms from one area to another—for example, out of an impact area into a reserve area—is not a successful conservation action and may do more harm than good to conserved populations by spreading diseases, stressing resident animals, increasing mortality, and decreasing reproduction and genetic diversity. Transplantation or translocations should be considered a last recourse for unavoidable impacts, should never be considered full mitigation for the impact, and in all cases must be treated as experiments subject to long-term monitoring and management. Additionally the Scientific Advisory Committee (SAC) of the Desert Tortoise Recovery Office (DTRO) of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service also recognizes that moving desert tortoise is “fraught with long-term uncertainties”<sup>8</sup>. Recent desert tortoise translocations have resulted in significant short-term mortality of 45% or greater<sup>9</sup> and unknown long-term survivorship. The EIS needs to clarify the definition of translocation and relocation. It needs to clarify how far desert tortoise are planned to be moved, where they will be moved, the condition of the host population, and assure that the site will be conserved in perpetuity to prevent subsequent relocation/translocation of desert tortoise. As per the Desert Tortoise Recovery Plan, relocations/translocations should not occur into DWMAs.

The Center has repeatedly sought stronger protections for desert tortoise and tortoise critical habitat both in the DWMAs and in other areas within the CDCA as a whole and particularly within the western Mojave desert. Despite the fact that desert tortoise populations in the west Mojave DWMAs continue to decline, further degradation is proposed not only by this proposed expansion but by other related activities including displaced ORV activities, which could affect DWMAs, which were established for desert tortoise recovery (not just survival).

*2. Sand Transport System*

The DEIS fails to consider the impacts that the proposed expansion area has on the sand transport system in the region<sup>10</sup>. The site need not have active dunes on it to be an integral part of the sand transport corridor and overall eolian system. The impacts of the proposed project to the sand transport corridor, and the sand dune habitat which supports the Mojave fringe-toed lizard could be significant and that analysis must be done in a revised or supplemental DEIS.

*3. Rare and Special Status Plants and Communities*

The DEIS fails to identify if any rare plant surveys were done within the expansion areas. These types of surveys need to be performed, not only for spring flowering rare plants but also for the suite of rare plant species that are triggered by summer monsoonal rains and bloom in the

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.energy.ca.gov/2010publications/DRECP-1000-2010-008/DRRCP-1000-2010-008-F.PDF>

<sup>8</sup> [http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert\\_tortoise/documents/sse/20090313\\_SAC\\_meeting\\_summary.pdf](http://www.fws.gov/nevada/desert_tortoise/documents/sse/20090313_SAC_meeting_summary.pdf)

<sup>9</sup> Gowen and Berry 2009.

<sup>10</sup> Muhs et al. 2003

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fall. These incomplete data sets preclude evaluation of the impacts, or more importantly the ability to avoid and minimize impacts. Clearly a supplemental DEIS is required to present these missing data.

The DEIS also fails to recognize that the western expansion area includes a large portion of an Unusual Plant Assemblage (UPA) for creosote rings and yucca rings as mapped in the California Desert Conservation Area (CDCA) Plan<sup>11</sup>

*4. Avifauna*

*Migratory Birds*

The DEIS does not quantify the number of birds (rare, migratory or otherwise) that use/traverse the proposed expansion area nor does it evaluate the impact to birds. The revised or supplemental DEIS needs to analyze likely impacts to birds from the proposed project activities based on the point counts.

The failure to provide the baseline data from which to make any impact assessment violates NEPA. This failure to analyze impacts is not only a NEPA violation, but for migratory birds, may also lead to a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, 16 U.S.C. §§ 703 -711, because migratory birds may be “taken” by the proposed expansion activities.

Executive Order 13186 states “Each Federal agency taking actions that have, or are likely to have, a measurable negative effect on migratory bird populations is directed to develop and implement, within 2 years, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) that shall promote the conservation of migratory bird populations.”<sup>12</sup> Furthermore the EO states that goals pursuant to the MOU include “(3) prevent or abate the pollution or detrimental alteration of the Environment for the benefit of migratory birds, as practicable;” and “(6) ensure that environmental analyses of Federal actions required by the NEPA or other established environmental review processes evaluate the effects of actions and agency plans on migratory birds, with emphasis on species of concern”. Clearly, the supplemental DEIR needs to adequately identify the migratory bird issues on site and evaluate the impact to those species in light of the guidance in Executive Order 13186.

*Burrowing Owls*

The DEIS notes that burrowing owls “are present in very low densities in the west study area (Karl 2009a)” (DEIS at 3.10-43). Preliminary results from the 2006-7 statewide census identified that the Mojave desert harbors few Western burrowing owls.<sup>13</sup> Even more worrisome is the documented crash of burrowing owls in their former stronghold in the Imperial Valley. The Imperial Valley has had a recently documented decline of 27% in the past 2 years<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.blm.gov/ca/st/en/prog/planning.html>

<sup>12</sup> <http://eeq.hqs.doe.gov/npa/reg/eos/eo13186.html>

<sup>13</sup> IBP 2008; Wilkerson and Siegel 2010

<sup>14</sup> Manning 2009.

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resulting in an even more dire state for burrowing owls in California. Because burrowing owls are in decline throughout California, and now their “stronghold” is documented to be declining severely, the burrowing owls in this proposed expansion area become even more important to species conservation efforts. The recirculated or supplemental DEIS needs to evaluate the potential impact of the proposed project on this regional distribution of owls.

While habitat acquisition specifically for burrowing owls needs to be identified in the DEIS. Mean burrowing owl foraging territories are 242 hectares in size, although foraging territories for owl in heavily cultivated areas is only 35 hectares<sup>15</sup>. Regardless, the acquisition of mitigation acreage should include adequate foraging area. Using the average foraging territory size for mitigation calculations may not accurately predict the carrying capacity and may *overestimate* the carrying capacity of the proposed expansion area – it may be that in this area of the Mojave desert 4,000+ acres is necessary to support 4 burrowing owls. Carrying capacity is tied to habitat quality, so language should be included that mitigation lands that are acquired for burrowing owl be native habitats on undisturbed lands, not cultivated lands, which are subject to the whims of land use changes. The long-term persistence of burrowing owls lie in their ability to utilize natural landscapes, not human-created ones.

While “passive relocation” may minimize immediate direct take of burrowing owls, ultimately the burrowing owls’ available habitat is reduced, and “relocated” birds are forced to compete for resources with other resident burrowing owls and may move into less suitable habitat, ultimately resulting in “take”.

Golden Eagle

The DEIS fails to identify if golden eagles occur on the expansion areas. The lack of basic baseline data precludes the ability to identify or analyze potential impacts to golden eagles from the proposed expansion activities. One fact is clear - significant amounts of foraging habitat will decrease carrying capacity because of training activities and could result in a potential loss of habitat needed to support a nesting pair, which would impact reproductive capacity.

Scientific literature on this subject is clear - the presence of humans detected by a raptor in its nesting or hunting habitat can be a significant habitat-altering disturbance even if the human is far from an active nest<sup>16</sup>. Regardless of distance, a straight-line view of disturbance affects raptors, and an effective approach to mitigate impacts of disturbance for golden eagles involves calculation of viewsheds using a three-dimensional GIS tool and development of buffers based on the modeling<sup>17</sup>. Golden eagles have also been documented to avoid industrialized areas that are developed in their territory.<sup>18</sup> Additionally, the DEIS does not actually clearly analyze the impacts to and mitigations for the golden eagle under the Bald Eagle

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15 USFWS 2003

16 Richardson and Miller 1997

17 Camp et al. 1997; Richardson and Miller 1997

18 Walker et al. 2005

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and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which prohibits, except under certain specified conditions, the take, possession, and commerce of such birds.

*5. Badger*

While badgers were not documented on the site, the proposed expansion area provides good habitat for them. Literature on the highly territorial badger indicates that badger home territories range from 340 to 1,230 hectares<sup>19</sup>. Therefore, the proposed project could displace numerous badger territories. While surveys prior to activities are clearly essential, even passive relocation of badgers into suitable habitat may result “take”. Excluding badger from the site is likely to cause badgers to move into existing badger’s territory. The recirculated or supplemental DEIS needs to include an actual analysis of impacts to badgers from the proposed project.

*6. Desert Kit Foxes*

The DEIS fails to mention the desert kit fox, much less provide data on the presence or absence of the species on site or the locations of natal and other types of dens. Desert kit foxes are “protected furbearing mammals” under California Code of Regulations, Title 14, section 460 and may not be “taken” at any time. As such the DEIS fails to analyze the impacts to this species. The revised or supplemental DEIS should identify the density of kit foxes in the proposed expansion area, including natal and other dens. If passive relocation is identified as an avoidance strategy, the DEIS must evaluate if suitable habitat occurs nearby and is not already occupied by existing kit foxes.

*7. Cryptobiotic soil crusts and Desert Pavement*

The proposed project is located in the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District area, which is already in non-attainment for PM-10 particulate matter<sup>20</sup>. The construction of the proposed project further increases emissions of these types of particles because of the disruption and elimination of potentially thousands of acres of cryptobiotic soil crusts. Cryptobiotic soil crusts are an essential ecological component in arid lands. They are the “glue” that holds surface soil particles together precluding erosion, provide “safe sites” for seed germination, trap and slowly release soil moisture, and provide CO<sub>2</sub> uptake through photosynthesis<sup>21</sup>.

The DEIS recognizes that on-site cryptobiotic soil crusts exist but defers the quantification and location of them to later. The proposed project will disturb an unidentified portion of these soil crusts and cause them to lose their capacity to stabilize soils and trap soil moisture. The DEIS fails to provide a map of the soil crusts over the project site, and to present any avoidance or minimization measures. It is unclear how many acres of cryptobiotics soils will be affected by the project. The revised or supplemental DEIS must identify the extent of the cryptobiotic soils on site and analyze the potential impacts to these diminutive, but essential desert ecosystem components as a result of this project.

<sup>19</sup> Long 1973, Goodrich and Buskirk 1998

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.indaqmd.ca.gov/index.aspx?page=214>

<sup>21</sup> Belnap 2003, Belnap et al 2003, Belnap 2006, Belnap et al. 2007

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The DEIS fails to address if naturally occurring desert pavements occur in the proposed expansion areas. The issues of desert pavement are similar to cryptobiotic soils in their ability to stabilize surface particles in place, precluding erosion and dust, and they are easily damaged by vehicles and form/reform over geological time scales. The supplemental EIS must quantify the acreage of pavement, identify avoidance and minimization measures and analyze the potential impacts to the desert pavement areas including an evaluation of the impacts to air quality from disturbance of desert pavements.

*8. Insects*

The DEIS fails to address insects on the proposed project site. In fact no surveys or evaluation of rare or common insects are included in the DEIS. Sandy habitats are notorious for supporting endemic insects, typically narrow habitat specialists<sup>22</sup>. The revised or supplemental DEIS must include an analysis of rare insects in the proposed expansion area and the potential impacts on their survival from training activities. These issues need to be addressed in a supplemental DEIS.

*9. Nelson's Bighorn Sheep*

Nelson's bighorn sheep are known to inhabit mountain ranges adjacent to the proposed expansion area and the current base. These large mammals require intermountain access in order to maintain herd viability<sup>23</sup> and currently their historic connectivity corridors have been eliminated in parts of their range<sup>24</sup>. Activities in the proposed expansion areas could further restrict connectivity for the bighorn in the area. The DEIS fails to analyze the documented herds in ranges besides the Ship Mountains and the repatriated Bullion- Cleghorn herd. The supplemental DEIS must include an analysis of impact to Nelson's bighorn.

Because the movement corridors for Nelson's bighorn sheep have already been eliminated in key areas, the DEIS should consider participating in the construction of land bridges over Interstate 40 that would re-establish movement of bighorn (and other species) from the mountain ranges north of I-40 to the mountain ranges south of I-40. This feature would significantly increase the ability of herds or rams to re-establish previous movement corridors and increase genetic diversity of the bighorn, provide safe passage for species on the move from climate change, and keep the larger Mojave ecosystem connected.

*10. Habitat Fragmentation*

The habitat fragmentation, loss of connectivity for terrestrial wildlife, and introduction of predators and invasive weed species associated with the proposed expansion and ensuing activities in the proposed locations may run contrary to an effective climate change adaptation strategy. Siting the proposed expansion in the proposed location impacting ecologically

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<sup>22</sup> Dunn 2005

<sup>23</sup> Epps et al. 2007, Epps et al 2006

<sup>24</sup> Epps et al. 2005

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functioning ecosystems, occupied habitat and important habitat linkage areas, major washes and other fragile desert resources could undermine a meaningful climate change adaptation strategy. Moreover, the expansion activities will emit additional greenhouse gases and the DEIS contains no discussion of ways to avoid, minimize or off-set these emissions although such mitigation is clearly necessary. The way to maintain healthy, vibrant ecosystems is not to fragment them and reduce their biodiversity.

*11. Failure to Identify Appropriate Mitigation*

As stated above, the DEIS not only fails to provide adequate identification and analysis of impacts, inevitably, it also fails to identify adequate mitigation measures for the expansion's environmental impacts. "Implicit in NEPA's demand that an agency prepare a detailed statement on 'any adverse environmental effects which cannot be avoided should the proposal be implemented,' 42 U.S.C. § 4332(C)(ii), is an understanding that an EIS will discuss the extent to which adverse effects can be avoided." *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 351-52. Because the DEIS does not adequately assess the project's direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts, its analysis of mitigation measures for those impacts is necessarily flawed. The DEIS must discuss mitigation in sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated." *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 352; *see also Idaho Sporting Congress*, 137 F.3d at 1151 ("[w]ithout analytical detail to support the proposed mitigation measures, we are not persuaded that they amount to anything more than a 'mere listing' of good management practices"). As the Supreme Court clarified in *Robertson*, 490 U.S. at 352, the "requirement that an EIS contain a detailed discussion of possible mitigation measures flows both from the language of [NEPA] and, more expressly, from CEQ's implementing regulations" and the "omission of a reasonably complete discussion of possible mitigation measures would undermine the 'action forcing' function of NEPA."

Although NEPA does not require that the harms identified actually be mitigated, NEPA does require that an EIS discuss mitigation measures, with "sufficient detail to ensure that environmental consequences have been fairly evaluated" and the purpose of the mitigation discussion is to evaluate whether anticipated environmental impacts *can be avoided*. *Methow Valley*, 490 U.S. at 351-52. As the Ninth Circuit recently noted: "[a] mitigation discussion without at least *some* evaluation of effectiveness is useless in making that determination." *South Fork Band Council of Western Shoshone v. DOI*, 588 F.3d 718, 727 (9th Cir. 2009) (emphasis in original).

Here, the DEIS does not provide a full analysis of possible mitigation measures to avoid or lessen the impacts of the proposed project and therefore the DEIS cannot properly assess the likelihood that such measures would actually avoid the impacts of the proposed project.

**D. Impacts to Water Resources— Surface and Groundwater Water Impacts**

As the DEIS notes, the proposed expansion encompasses a large number of washes and ephemeral streams and dry lakes that are not always dry. These areas provide important habitat values that will be compromised by the proposed training activities. Moreover, any loss of natural surface water flows and the re-direction of surface waters will have significant impacts to

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the dunes ecosystems. The impacts on soils and particularly on sand transport from the proposed project have not been adequately addressed in the DEIS.

Ephemeral and intermittent streams make up over 81% in the arid and semi-arid southwest (Arizona, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Colorado and California). These streams provide a variety of ecosystem services including

- landscape hydrologic connections;
- stream energy dissipation during high-water flows to reduce erosion and improve water quality;
- surface and subsurface water storage and exchange;
- ground-water recharge and discharge;
- sediment transport, storage, and deposition to aid in floodplain maintenance and development;
- nutrient storage and cycling;
- wildlife habitat and migration corridors;
- support for vegetation communities to help stabilize stream banks and provide wildlife services;
- and water supply and water-quality filtering<sup>25</sup>.

Yet the DEIS fails to evaluate the impact of the proposed project on the ephemeral and intermittent streams and the ecosystem processes that they provide both on and off of the proposed project site. The revised or supplement DEIS will need to include an analysis of these important issues.

**E. The DEIS Fails to Adequately Identify, Analyze and Off-set Impacts to Air Quality and GHG Emissions.**

Federal courts have squarely held that NEPA requires federal agencies to analyze climate change impacts. *Center for Biological Diversity v. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration*, 508 F.3d 508 (9th Cir. 2007). As most relevant here, NEPA requires consideration of greenhouse gas emissions (“GHG emissions”) associated with all projects and, in order to fulfill this requirement the agencies should look at all aspects of the project which may create greenhouse gas emissions including operations, construction, and life-cycle emissions from materials. Where a proposed activity will have significant GHG emissions, the agency should identify alternatives and/or mitigation measures that will lessen such effects.

As part of the NEPA analysis federal agencies must assess and, wherever possible, quantify or estimate GHG emissions by type and source by analyzing the direct operational impacts of proposed actions. Assessment of direct emissions of GHG from on-site combustion sources is relatively straightforward. For the proposed activities, energy consumption for vehicles, manufacturing, transportation and construction will be the major source of GHGs. The indirect effects of a project may be more far-reaching and will require careful analysis. Within this category, for example, the supplemental EIS should evaluate, GHG and GHG-precursor emissions associated with construction, electricity use, fossil fuel use, water consumption, waste

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<sup>25</sup> Levick et al. 2008.

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disposal, transportation, the manufacture of building materials (lifecycle analysis), and land conversion. Moreover, because many project may undermine or destroy the value of carbon sinks, including desert soils, the activities may have additional indirect effects from reduction in carbon sequestration, therefore both the direct and quantifiable GHG emissions as well as the GHG effects of destruction of carbon sinks should be analyzed.

The DEIS also fails to adequately address other air quality issues including PM10 both during activities which is of particular concern in this area which is a nonattainment area for PM10 and ozone. It is clear that extensive soil disturbing activities will result in significant amounts of bare soils and increased PM10 may be introduced into the air by wind and that the use of the area during training activities and operations will lead to additional PM10 emissions from the site. Although some mitigation measures are suggested they are not specific and enforceable and because the extent of the impact has not been adequately addressed as an initial matter there is no way to show that the mitigation measures proffered will reduce the impacts to less than significance.

The DEIS fails to analyze the GHG emissions in a meaningful way and therefore does not provide for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation. The DEIS has also failed to include the loss of carbon sequestration from soils in its calculations or to provide a lifecycle analysis of GHG emissions that include manufacturing and disposal of equipment. Moreover, it is undisputed that in the near-term GHG emissions will increase emissions during training activities, and in the manufacturing and transportation of the equipment. The DEIS fails to consider any alternatives to the project that would minimize such emissions or to require that these near-term emissions be off set in any way.

**F. The Analysis of Cumulative Impacts in the DEIS Is Inadequate**

A cumulative impact is “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions. Cumulative impacts can result from individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time.” 40 C.F.R. § 1508.7. The Ninth Circuit requires federal agencies to “catalogue” and provide useful analysis of past, present, and future projects. *City of Carmel-By-The-Sea v. U.S. Dept. of Transp.*, 123 F.3d 1142, 1160 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1997); *Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 809-810 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1999).

“In determining whether a proposed action will significantly impact the human environment, the agency must consider [w]hether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. Significance exists if it is reasonable to anticipate a cumulatively significant impact on the environment.” 40 C.F.R. § 1508.27(b)(7).” *Oregon Natural Resources Council v. BLM*, 470 F.3d 818, 822-823 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 2006). NEPA requires that cumulative impacts analysis provide “some quantified or detailed information,” because “[w]ithout such information, neither courts nor the public . . . can be assured that the Forest Service provided the hard look that it is required to provide.” *Neighbors of Cuddy Mountain v. United States Forest Service*, 137 F.3d 1372, 1379 (9<sup>th</sup> Cir. 1988), see also *id.* (“very general” cumulative impacts information was not hard look required by NEPA). The

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discussion of future foreseeable actions requires more than a list of the number of acres affected, which is a necessary but not sufficient component of a NEPA analysis; the agency must also consider the actual environmental effects that can be expected from the projects on those acres. See *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995-96 (9th Cir. 2004) (finding that the environmental review documents “do not sufficiently identify or discuss the incremental impact that can be expected from each [project], or how those individual impacts might combine or synergistically interact with each other to affect the [] environment. As a result, they do not satisfy the requirements of the NEPA.”) Finally, cumulative analysis must be done as early in the environmental review process as possible, it is not appropriate to “defer consideration of cumulative impacts to a future date. “NEPA requires consideration of the potential impacts of an action before the action takes place.”” *Neighbors*, 137 F.3d at 1380 quoting *City of Tenakee Springs v. Clough*, 915 F.2d 1308, 1313 (9th Cir. 1990) (emphasis in original).

The DEIS identifies some of the cumulative projects but does not meaningfully analyze the cumulative impacts to resources in the California desert from the many proposed projects (including renewable energy projects, transmission, and others). Moreover, because the initial identification and analysis of impacts is unfinished, the cumulative impacts analysis cannot be complete. For example, because the identification of potentially occurring rare plants on site is unfinished and incomplete, the cumulative impacts are also therefore inadequate.

The DEIS also fails to consider all reasonably foreseeable impacts in the context of the cumulative impacts analysis. See *Native Ecosystems Council v. Dombek, et al*, 304 F.3d 886 (9th Cir. 2002) (finding future timber sales and related forest road restriction amendments were “reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts”). The DEIS also fails to provide the needed analysis of how the impacts might combine or synergistically interact to affect the environment in this region. See *Klamath-Siskiyou Wildlands Ctr. v. BLM*, 387 F.3d 989, 995-96 (9th Cir. 2004).

The NEPA regulations also require that indirect effects including changes to land use patterns and induced growth be analyzed. “Indirect effects,” include those that “are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Indirect effects may include *growth inducing effects and other effects related to induced changes in the pattern of land use, population density or growth rate, and related effects on air and water and other natural systems, including ecosystems.*” 40 C.F.R. s.1508.8(b) (emphasis added). See *TOMAC v. Norton*, 240 F. Supp.2d 45, 50-52 (D.D.C. 2003) (finding NEPA review lacking where the agency failed to address secondary growth as it pertained to impacts to groundwater, prime farmland, floodplains and stormwater run-off, wetlands and wildlife and vegetation); *Friends of the Earth v. United States Army Corps of Eng’rs*, 109 F. Supp.2d 30, 43 (D.D.C. 2000) (finding NEPA required analysis of inevitable secondary development that would result from casinos, and the agency failed to adequately consider the cumulative impact of casino construction in the area); see also *Mullin v. Skimmer*, 756 F. Supp. 904, 925 (E.D.N.C. 1990) (Agency enjoined from proceeding with bridge project which induced growth in island community until it prepared an adequate EIS identifying and discussing in detail the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of and alternatives to the proposed Project); *City of Davis v. Coleman*, 521 F.2d 661 (9th Cir. 1975) (requiring agency to prepare an EIS on effects of proposed freeway interchange on a major interstate highway in an agricultural area and to

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include a full analysis of both the environmental effects of the exchange itself and of the development potential that it would create).

Among the cumulative impacts to resources that have not been fully analyzed are impacts to desert tortoise, impacts to sand transport systems and Mojave fringe-toed lizard habitat, impacts to golden eagles, and impacts to water resources. The cumulative impacts to the resources of the California deserts has not been fully identified or analyzed, and mitigation measures have not been fully analyzed as well.

**G. The EIS' Alternatives Analysis is Inadequate**

NEPA requires that an EIS contain a discussion of the “alternatives to the proposed action.” 42 U.S.C. §§ 4332(C)(ii),(E). The discussion of alternatives is at “the heart” of the NEPA process, and is intended to provide a “clear basis for choice among options by the decisionmaker and the public.” 40 C.F.R. §1502.14; *Idaho Sporting Congress*, 222 F.3d at 567 (compliance with NEPA’s procedures “is not an end in itself . . . [but] it is through NEPA’s action forcing procedures that the sweeping policy goals announced in § 101 of NEPA are realized.”) (internal citations omitted). NEPA’s regulations and Ninth Circuit case law require the agency to “rigorously explore” and objectively evaluate “all reasonable alternatives.” 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a) (emphasis added); *Envtl. Prot. Info. Ctr. v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 234 Fed. Appx. 440, 442 (9th Cir. 2007). “The purpose of NEPA’s alternatives requirement is to ensure agencies do not undertake projects “without intense consideration of other more ecologically sound courses of action, including shelving the entire project, or of accomplishing the same result by entirely different means.” *Envtl. Defense Fund, Inc. v. U.S. Army Corps of Engrs.*, 492 F.2d 1123, 1135 (5th Cir. 1974). An agency will be found in compliance with NEPA only when “all reasonable alternatives have been considered and an appropriate explanation is provided as to why an alternative was eliminated.” *Native Ecosystems Council v. U.S. Forest Serv.*, 428 F.3d 1233, 1246 (9th Cir. 2005); *Bob Marshall Alliance v. Hodel*, 852 F.2d 1223, 1228-1229 (9th Cir. 1988). The courts, in the Ninth Circuit as elsewhere, have consistently held that an agency’s failure to consider a reasonable alternative is fatal to an agency’s NEPA analysis. *See, e.g., Idaho Conserv. League v. Mumma*, 956 F.2d 1508, 1519-20 (9th Cir. 1992) (“The existence of a viable, but unexamined alternative renders an environmental impact statement inadequate.”).

If the EIS rejects an alternative from consideration, it must explain why a particular option is not feasible and was therefore eliminated from further consideration. 40 C.F.R. § 1502.14(a). The courts will scrutinize this explanation to ensure that the reasons given are adequately supported by the record. *See Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. U.S. Forest Service*, 177 F.3d 800, 813-15 (9th Cir. 1999); *Idaho Conserv. League*, 956 F.2d at 1522 (while agencies can use criteria to determine which options to fully evaluate, those criteria are subject to judicial review); *Citizens for a Better Henderson*, 768 F.2d at 1057.

Here, the DEIS too narrowly construed the project purpose and need such that the DEIS did not consider an adequate range of alternatives to the proposed project. The alternatives analysis is inadequate even with the inclusion of the alternative site configurations and a reduced acreage alternative. Additional feasible alternatives should be considered which would avoid occupied desert tortoise habitat as well as alternatives that would have used other existing

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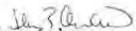
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military bases in the area for cooperative training exercises.

**II. Conclusion**

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. In light of the many omissions in the environmental review to date, we urge MCAGCC to revise and re-circulate the DEIS or prepare a supplemental DEIS before making any decision regarding the proposed expansion areas and activities. In the event MCAGCC chooses not to revise the DEIS and provide adequate analysis, the MCAGCC should reject the expansion proposal. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about these comments or the documents provided.

Sincerely,

  
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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2321

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** For once and for all start listening to the middle man's comments

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2322

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please see attached document

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2322 (Page 1 of 4)**

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

The DEIS states:  
Potential impacts from six action alternatives and the No-Action Alternative have been analyzed. Potential impacts have been analyzed for land use, recreation, socioeconomics and environmental justice, public health and safety, visual resources, transportation and circulation, airspace management, air quality, noise, biological resources, cultural resources, geological resources, and water resources. Cumulative effects of the proposed action in conjunction with other past, present, or reasonably foreseeable future actions are also analyzed.

**3.11 Cultural Resources.** The DEIS states that cultural resources would be managed in accordance with the provisions of federal laws and regulations as well as Marine Corps policy. The Programmatic Agreement (PA) Between the United States Marine Corps and the California State Historic Preservation Officer Regarding Operation, Maintenance, Training and Construction at the United States Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, California, would be amended to include any lands acquired as a consequence of the proposed action alternative.

The Table on Page 29 states under Alternative 1, Cultural Resources:  
Less than Significant Impacts (LSI):

- Direct and indirect impacts may result from weapons fire, MEB operations, group and individual traffic, battalion movements, aviation Weapons Danger Zone, and construction.
- Special Conservation Measures and other measures would be implemented to avoid or reduce impacts to resources.

No Impacts (NI):  
No impact anticipated from airspace establishment.

Similar judgements are made in this Table and elsewhere for the other Alternatives.

However, the DEIS only analyzes all these things within the areas being studied for acquisition, where there are few if any residents. It is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents and Cultural Resources outside the EIS area will not be impacted, when the public scoping issues (4.3.1.3) include:  
• Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film

**Response to Comment 2322 (Page 1 of 4):**

Thank you for your comment. Sections 3.11 and 4.11 of the EIS identify and discuss impacts to Cultural Resources, respectively. The EIS has been updated as appropriate to acknowledge communities that may be applicable to the 1938 Small-Tract Homestead Act. The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (refer to Section 4.3 of the EIS). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending. In addition, the EIS acknowledges potential impacts to property values due to increased noise and proximity to military operating areas (see Section 4.3 of the EIS). The EIS concludes that any reduction in property value would likely be marginal and less than significant.

The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2322 (Page 2 of 4)

Response to Comment 2322 (Page 2 of 4):

industries

- Devaluation of surrounding private property.
  - Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement.
- All would occur outside the acquisition study boundaries.

Therefore this contradiction must be corrected, and these and other communities which are neighbors to the Base must be included in all analyses, and in particular under Cultural Resources. It must also be stated that the DEIS did not do this.

The communities of Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights, Yucca Mesa and Wonder Valley border the existing base and the planned expansion areas.

They were founded under the Small Homestead Act of 1939 (also known as the Jackrabbit Homestead Act), an Act of Congress in which the Federal Government, in order to spur growth and utilization of our desert lands, provided individuals with 5-acre parcels of land under the condition that they would build a residence on the property within two years of award. The idea was to stimulate recreational use and settlement of the vast desert lands.

The National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 establishes historic eligibility under various criteria including: Association with Historic Events.

Because of the history of these homestead communities linking their founding to the Small Homestead Act, they have historic eligibility status since they were created under that historic Act (as is the case with the original Homestead Act of 1862), and should be included in the DEIS for study as cultural resources.

Johnson Valley, Landers, Flamingo Heights and Wonder Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to live in other locations where it may be less stressful in some ways, but the cost of living is much higher. My grandparents have retired here and are now too old to make this move possible. In turn, my parents plan to rebuild on the property and retire here as well, not only to look after my aging grandparents but also to preserve the property which was acquired over 50 years ago. In turn, this land will be inherited by the next generation who holds just as much respect for the area.

-The noise modeling discussed on Page 540 and elsewhere is completely misleading because averages are used rather than noise levels from separate events such as explosions or helicopters. This is a complete misrepresentation and highly deceptive to readers who do not live near this Base, or any other with live fire training, and have not experienced this for themselves. Noise and vibration extend well beyond the study area, and the DEIS must be corrected everywhere it implies it does not.

Comment ID: 2322 (Page 3 of 4)

Response to Comment 2322 (Page 3 of 4):

-These homestead communities have co-existed with the Base for decades as the DEIS correctly states. However, modern weaponry is not the same as was used even 20 years ago. Whichever Alternative is chosen, the training exercises are planned to increase both in intensity and duration. The DEIS must be changed to delete this argument, or the escalation of noise and vibration must be recognized and reported as having a significant impact on the surrounding homestead communities, which must be considered as Cultural Resources.

-Very few people consider it desirable to move to a home that will be shaken by noise and shock waves at any hour of the day or night, or overflowed by helicopters at any hour of the day or night, particularly when they want to move to a rural community with expectations of enjoying more peace and quiet than can be found in urban areas. Since the first announcement of the proposed base expansion, realtors have been required to disclose it, and sales are lost, which is a financial impact on the historic communities and brings into question their very survival.

"Folks with the blood of pioneers—or of poets—running strong in their veins, will regard the task as a grand adventure. I know Los Angeles people who spent most of their weekends for months building a stone cabin on their claim. And what fun they had doing it! Two days every week they drove out and mixed mortar and hauled rocks, and stone by stone the little cabin took form. It isn't a perfect construction job—but it is theirs. They planned it themselves and built it with their own hands—and in terms of spiritual values it is worth more than a mansion in a ritzy subdivision."

—Desert Magazine 1944

The following is a link to the story of a homesteading family in Johnson Valley, who still own the place and are historians themselves.

<http://www.coutant.org/mminternet/saga/index.html>

The photo attached is taken looking northeast toward the existing Base, courtesy Stan Coutant. It shows the homesteads and how close they are to the proposed westward expansion area.

The DEIS must be changed to address the impacts on these communities as historic cultural resources, with unique attractions for historic studies and recreation. The findings of less than significant impacts and no impacts under all Alternatives must be reworded to state there will be significant impacts to these communities, and that the DEIS overlooked this issue.

My family homesteaded the land on Ranch Road and Moose Ranch Road in Twentynine Palms over 50 years ago. Since then we have acquired a large amount of acreage that is used as a permanent residence for some and an expect place for retirement for several others. We ask that appropriate measures take place so that the proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will not cause such significant impacts to the population.

Thank you,

**Comment ID: 2322 (Page 4 of 4)**

**Response to Comment 2322 (Page 4 of 4):**

Angela Smith  
11943 Rancho Cucamonga, CA 91739  
909-466-7434

Duane and Carrie Alexander  
2364 C Park Blvd.  
Upland, CA 91786  
909-949-9194

**Comment ID** 2323

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Sirs, I have been camping, 4-wheeling, and working with the BigHorn sheep in your proposed closure areas for many years. As A member of The Society For the Conservation of BigHorn Sheep, we have been trying to increase their population back to historical levels and keep them off the endangered species list. It is a huge struggle but gradually their population is rising. Your proposed growth happens to be in wonderful sheep habitat, and I can't imagine tanks, bombs, artillery and personnel will be of any possible benefitt to them! Just exactly how much land does the military need? I spent my time in the Air Force, and I am certainly pro military, but this expansion seems crazy. I would like to see an extension of the comment period, and I really wonder how you will keep ordinance out of the public use areas. I have personally seen ordinance on my excursions in the desert and you don't seem to be able to keep your ordinance where it belongs, and then you don't even clean it up. I wonder what your excuse will be when an innocent child or adult is hurt or killed due to your lack of responsibility. It seems as though the military has about 1/4 of the southwest now as military use areas. I did not see any proposals to just leave the land alone. Once you have it, it will never be open to the public again. That's ashame. The desert is a beautiful area for expolring, recreation, camping, photography, etc. Why ruin it forever for the rest of us??????? I understand your need to practice to keep our shores safe, but it seems you are taking away from the public, the very things you are supposed to be protecting! Our land. Sincerely, Robert Bissell

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to wildlife species.

As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large-scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM's management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

As discussed in Section 2.4.7 of the EIS, the No-Action Alternative has been carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Ultimately, congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

|                              |                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2324                                                                                   |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Sall                                                                                   |
| <b>First Name</b>            | April                                                                                  |
| <b>Comment</b>               | See attachement                                                                        |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/26/2011                                                                              |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter. |

**Comment ID: 2324 (Page 1 of 3)**

May 26<sup>th</sup>, 2011

**RE: 29 Palms US MCAGCC Land Acquisition/Airspace Establishment Study; Scoping Comments for the draft EIS; delivered via hard copy and electronic public comment form**

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. I would like the following scoping comments to be considered part of the record for this DEIS.

**Scoping Comments:**

The Department of Defense (DOD) has proposed a major expansion of the Twenty-nine Palms Marine Base into the Johnson Valley OHV Area currently owned and managed by the Bureau of Land Management. It has been stated that the Marine Corps Air Ground and Combat Center (MCAGCC) is the only military base location that will provide sufficient land and airspace potential to meet the training requirements for a large scale Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF). There has not been sufficient information or evidence to back up that assumption nor a sensible, articulated case made for the need to expand. Of course every land managing entity would like to expand but that does not mean that it is appropriate. DOD provided any reasonable explanation for why the 29 Palms MCAGCC cannot share lands with the newly expanded Fort Irwin Military Base and train cooperatively for military operations. Furthermore, the argument that the MCAGCC needs the expansion to train for the War in Iraq and Afghanistan has many flaws including but not limited to: there is no landscape in the U.S. large enough to realistically simulate those foreign war landscapes.

The JV OHV Area is the largest, oldest and one of the most well established in the nation and cannot be replaced. It provides multiple recreational opportunities for enthusiasts of all skill levels. It also has the space for long-distance race courses no other CA area offers. JVOHVA has become an "icon" not just for off-roading, but for a myriad of other recreational and resource-related land-uses. The other OHV Areas in the Mojave Desert cannot accommodate JV's current use. Even with the small portion of the open area remaining in the Anderson Dry Lake areas adjacent to Camp rock Rd. - displacement will result in more local, private land trespass and incursion into more environmentally sensitive and protected BLM areas.

**Alternatives:**

The current preferred alternative (#6) states that a large portion of current OHV lands will be taken permanently and 44% of the recreational lands in Johnson Valley will be available 10 months out the year. This will not likely be the end result as once USMCAGCC has completed the withdrawal and taken ownership the next action will be to further reduce and eliminate OHV use for the majority of the year. The alternative has many other design flaws that unnecessarily impact the OHV use. For example in alternative 6 the training battalions and troops would move from east to west with would

**Response to Comment 2324 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available

**Comment ID: 2324 (Page 2 of 3)**

drastically increase the live fire in the OHV area making cleanup infinitely more difficult and dangerous and result in more OHV closures. Also the claim that the acreage needed for alternative 6 would accommodate the desired training conditions is inconsistent since this number changes constantly depending on which commander or Public Relations representative is speaking. For example just in the DOD brochure explaining all of the alternatives published in April of 2011, Alternative 2 utilizes 134,863 total acres while alternative 6 asks for 167,971 acres.

I strongly urge a “no action” alternative; despite its lack of presence as a legitimate alternative in the current draft EIS. I also request that the suggested permit procedure that was mentioned in public meetings be available for public examination.

Furthermore DOD should draft a new DEIS that has a broader range of alternatives including the above, a shared cooperative training alternative with Fort Irwin and lastly a hybrid alternative that modestly and more appropriately expands no more that 4 to 5 square miles in all directions where public land exists to minimize the effects to public conservation and recreation lands and private properties.

**Impacts:**

The environmental impacts that will result from loss of open space and recreation lands within Johnson Valley OHV area will be significant and unmitigatable should the preferred alternative be chosen. Additional impacts should also be considered and proposed mitigation for those impacts defined in the next document.

**Economics:** If the JV OHV Area is shut down or substantially reduced, local communities would suffer a significant loss of revenue from OHV-related traffic - major filming/commercials - mining - general recreation – etc. The revenue generated by travelers headed to JV keeps most of our local businesses open. Most of the businesses in our town are here “because they want to be” - not because it is financially lucrative - in effect subsidizing us with goods and services well beyond what are normally available in other communities with our population and demographics. The profit margin for our businesses is already a “stay-open/break-even” situation. Loss of current weekend business would be the “straw on the camel’s back” that would force them to shut down.

**Renewable Energy Projects:** The desert is currently experiencing a land rush with renewable energy companies, subsidized by the federal government, seeking permits to develop on our public recreation and conservation lands. In its peak in 2008 over 1.2 million acres of the Ca Desert Conservation Area were under application for development. Everyone wants a large piece of the CA desert public lands, including DOD. Furthermore these projects are already revealing enormous, irreversible negative impacts on desert resources and wildlife. The desert tortoise is suffering significant mortality for RE development (i.e. Ivanpah) and the proposed western expansion would result in further tortoise impacts and

**Response to Comment 2324 (Page 2 of 3):**

within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts.

**Comment ID: 2324 (Page 3 of 3)**

loss. Mitigation is not sufficient and translocation results in high risks and mortality as evident in the Fort Irwin expansion and translocation disaster.

Recreation: There is no public landscape in the CDCA that could replace JV. Therefore there is no appropriate mitigation that could be designed to fully replace it and compensate the recreation and entrepreneurial users. OHV users are currently losing thousands of acres a year of recreational lands to other uses and development, with little to no compensation. Furthermore CA requires a Green Sticker fee which has been increasing over the years and yet there are less and less lands to recreate on. Also nearly \$200,000 was robbed from that fund by State Politicians and allocated to budget deficits and again no mitigation or compensation was given.

Private Property: San Bernardino passed an OHV Ordinance a few years back to help protect private property owners from frequent OHV related trespass and vandalism. However that program has been gutted of staff and funds as has the local San Bernardino County Sheriff's departments. BLM is also understaffed and has always had an overwhelming ratio of land per officer (somewhere around 1 million acres per officer is the average the last five-ten years). Private property owners are now left on their own to defend their property and their American dream from lost and frustrated riders that the DOD wishes to displace. DOD has not offered any solutions for this problem, such as paying for multiple law enforcement officers and rangers to patrol and enforce new boundaries for the OHV area to help private property owners, conservation areas, communities and confused out-of-town recreationists. In fact the USMCAGCC representative at recent meetings stated unsympathetically "Well, we will try to help communities with that problem in the future" but offered no assurances or solutions. This is a problem DOD and the USMCAGCC have created and enhanced for local residents and appropriate and helpful solutions need to be paid for by said parties.

Again I urge DOD and the USMCAGCC to go back to the drawing board and analyze if expansion is really appropriate and what war we are trying to plan for. Again, a co-use plan with other desert military bases should be explored and available for public review. If it is still determined and articulated that an expansion is appropriate other alternatives need to be proposed to minimize the effects on Private property, private conservation lands, wilderness and designated OHV Areas.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,  
April Sall

**Response to Comment 2324 (Page 3 of 3):**

Additional information regarding the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2325

**Last Name** Bland

**First Name** David

**Comment** I would like to question the necessity of expanding the Marine Corp training area into one of the most popular OHV areas in California. I have been using this area with my family for many years, and hope to continue using it with my children. Thousands of others feel the same way. I urge you to consider the impact of this project and evaluate the necessity of this project as it pertains to the current and future predicted resources of the Marine Corp. Will this land truly be utilized as much as claimed or will it simply be an inefficient use of space? I ask you to compare the goals of this project (which has been planned for many years and possible outdated) to the proposed future of the Marine Corp (as described by General James Amos in his 2011 report to Congress). I fully support the need for a well trained United States military, but request your careful consideration before removing our freedoms to visit our favorite areas in the interest of our "freedom".

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement

the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2326

**Last Name** welch

**First Name** timothy

**Comment** To whom it may concern, The Johnson valley OHV area has long been a favorite spot for my family and friends to gather and enjoy OHV and camping activities. The loss of this area will no doubt greatly impact my family's ability to enjoy OHV activities as its closure would no doubt cause larger crowds at other local spots making it potentially unsafe due to increased traffic in the neighboring OHV areas. Please leave this OHV area to the public as available OHV areas like these are very rare and are extremely valuable destinations for good family activities like camping and OHV riding. Best Regards, Tim Welch

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational

opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2327

**Last Name** Murray

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** I'm all for the expansion 100%! It will bring more jobs to the 29 Palms area, I'm a retired military business owner. In 29 Palms you either get the opportunity to get a job on the Marine base or work for MUSD. They are the 2 largest employers in this area. Jobs are so scarce, so me & my wife opened up our own place of business.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2328

**Last Name** Turk

**First Name** Laraine

**Comment** Please see attached PDF document for the Morongo Basin Conservation Association.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2328 (Page 1 of 2)



Morongo Basin Conservation Association, Inc.  
mbconservation.org

May 26, 2011

Comments on the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment EIS

Submitted to: <http://www.marines.mil/unit/29palms/LAS/Pages/default.aspx>

The Morongo Basin Conservation Association is a 501(c)(4), community-based, California Non-Profit Corporation. The Directors and members of the MBCA have been educating Morongo Basin residents about issues affecting our economic and environmental health since our incorporation in 1969. MBCA is the oldest collective voice for educating the Morongo Basin's citizens about the unique, natural qualities of which they are stewards, and what is needed to preserve those features.

We have reviewed the Draft EIS for the proposed expansion and community meetings. Six alternatives propose expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Open Area, which borders the Morongo Basin. Although it has been made clear that the Preferred Alternative is Alternative Six, we wish to go on record for a "No Action" alternative. We would prefer there be no land acquisition that reduces the Johnson Valley OHV Open Area. However, should Alternative Six be chosen, our comments below are intended to clarify our concerns over related Draft EIS issues, and to suggest some offsets/ remedies.

Johnson Valley is the largest riding area in the state with the highest number of visitor use days. Under Alternatives 1, 4, and 5 the Marine Corps would have exclusive use of 91% (180,000 acres). Alternative 6, the preferred alternative, developed in response to public comments, allows for recreational use of approximately 40,000 of the 146,667 acquired acres during the 10 months of the year that the MEB does not require use.

The environmental impacts resulting from the loss of riding areas to the region are evaluated under 4.2 and include an increase in illegal use of OHVs in surrounding public lands and on private property. SCM -1 and -2 mitigate the loss and offset illegal riding with education and signage. SCM-3 offers coordination by the Marine Base with local law enforcement and community groups to reduce illegal OHV use within communities surrounding the acquisition areas. No specific examples are provided on how this coordination might work.

OHV riders and groups have threatened to use the surrounding desert and sparsely developed community areas if Johnson Valley recreational opportunities are impacted. Long experience demonstrates these threats are not trivial and could result in the following:

NEPA-1

REC-1

REC-2

Response to Comment 2328 (Page 1 of 2):

NEPA-1:

The proposed action and alternatives, including the No-Action Alternative are described in Chapter 2 of the EIS. Although the No-Action Alternative does not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action, it has been carried forward for analysis in the EIS as described in Chapter 4 under each resource area. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

REC-1:

Thank you for your comment. The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a supplemental Recreation Study to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

Comment ID: 2328 (Page 2 of 2)

- increased trespass and damage to private and public lands
- increased destruction of vegetation and wildlife habitat
- increased dust, noise and nuisance
- increased conflicts between riders and residents
- increased damage to roads, berms and flood control infrastructure
- increased costs of repair of these features for local taxpayers
- increased demand for emergency, law enforcement, code enforcement and other public services and increased costs associated with these services

REC-2

We offer the following specific measures to offset impacts resulting from Johnson Valley Open Area closure even if that closure is not permanent year round.

- Funding for 2 BLM-Barstow law enforcement rangers dedicated to patrolling and protecting the public lands in the Johnson valley 'sphere of influence'
- Coordination with local citizen and conservation groups and funding to increase public education and restoration efforts for private and public lands damaged by illegal OHV activities
- Permanent and highly visible informational kiosks with maps and a statement of the laws in these locations:
  1. Morongo Grade (Highway 62, west end of Yucca Valley)
  2. Highway 62 at the intersection with Highway 247
  3. Along Highway 247 north and south of Johnson Valley
  4. On Highway 62 east and west of the City of 29 Palms
  5. In Landers
  6. In Yucca Mesa
  7. In Flamingo Heights
  8. On Amboy Road in Wonder Valley
  9. Sunfair Dry Lake
  10. Along highway 62 east and west of the Town of Joshua Tree

NEPA-2

We appreciate this opportunity to comment and look forward to cooperating with the Base on public education.

GEN-1

Sincerely,



Laraine D. Turk  
 President, Morongo Basin Conservation Association  
 On Behalf of the Board of Directors

Response to Comment 2328 (Page 2 of 2):

REC-2:

The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources. As a result of public and agency comments received on the Draft EIS, the Marine Corps conducted a supplemental Recreation Study to further evaluate displaced OHV use (legal and illegal OHV activity) to support the development of the EIS. Results of this study are referenced in the Final EIS.

NEPA-2 and GEN-1:

The Marine Corps appreciated your comment and suggestions. As discussed in Section 2.5 of the EIS, if legislation affecting the proposed acquisition study area is passed by Congress and becomes law, the BLM and DoN would prepare a Recreation Management Plan and amend existing Resource Management Plans (i.e., Natural and Cultural Resource Management Plans) to reflect changes brought about by any such law, and would define how resources in the acquired lands would be managed, including those that would be designated as an Restricted Public Access Area (RPAA). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan (and updating existing management plans), the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, local law enforcement, and other agencies and organizations.

**Comment ID** 2329

**Last Name** Baker

**First Name** Harry

**Comment** Submitted by: Harry Baker California Association of 4 Wheel Drive Clubs, Inc. Partnership For Johnson Valley 5004 Enfield Avenue Encino, California 91316 818-705-3930 bakerhab@aol.com During the initial planning process the Marines chose to avoid Congressionally Designated Wilderness areas as prospective expansion opportunities. The screening criteria set forth on page 2-12 of the DEIS, Alternatives Analysis Screening Criteria, predetermines a course of action, which precludes consideration of expansion to the East and Southeast study areas. The Marine Corps must reevaluate all potential sites for expansion without the use of this pre-decisional criteria. All public lands must be considered without prejudice.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes an action alternative (Alternative 3) that would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2330

**Last Name** Hanel

**First Name** John

**Comment** Ladies and Gentlemen of the Marines, You need to look for land east of the base. Johnson Valley has been set aside for recreational use. My family and I have been using Johnson Valley to get away from urban life

for 30 years, and my grandsons and granddaughters are just now learning to ride motorcycles there. Trying to pack the huge number of people that use Johnson Valley into a quarter of the land will turn the area into a zoo. I would probably consider some type of dual use, where the Marines could reserve the area at times, as long as you do the same thing we do: Pack it in, pack it out. The land was set aside for recreation use. Leave it that way.  
Steve Hanel

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2331

**Last Name** Woods

**First Name** John

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2332

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Please accept the following as official comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment at Marines Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for a new planning rule, on behalf of the California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA), it's members and members clubs. These comments shall in no way prevent other members or representatives of CORVA from submitting additional comments, that shall also become part of the public record. The California Off-Road Vehicle Association (CORVA) represents thousands off Outdoor Recreation Enthusiasts who enjoy venturing into our public lands to pursue a wide variety of interests. It's critical for the Marine Corps, while proposing to withdraw thousand and thousands of acres from public purview, to recognize that Americans use many types of off-highway vehicles on public lands to access recreational pursuits, hunting, mineral collection, as well as taking time with their children and families to enjoy the beauty our country has to offer. This proposal must be subject to the strictest scrutiny, which should not be misinterpreted as a lack of support for our country's military. CORVA as an organization, along with our

thousands of members, support the Marine Corps in their mission to protect our country and its citizens. But any proposed prohibitions or limitations on recreational access must be evaluated as to the effect on the health and well-being of members of the public at large and our members. We find that this analysis fails to evaluate the human aspect of the environment, or the consequences of the proposed changes to the desert environment. The National Environmental Policy Act encourages public input; it requires agencies to "Make diligent efforts to involve the public in preparing and implementing their NEPA procedures" 1 CORVA contends that the Marine Corps did not follow the letter and intent of the law in the preparation and release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). The release of the document was not correctly noticed in the Federal Register, the due date was incorrectly stated, and on all the public documents available on the project website, the mailing address was unavailable to the public. Certainly NEPA never intended that the mailing address for submitting public comments should be hidden from the public. According to regulation 40 CFR 1500.2(d); "(d) Encourage and facilitate public involvement in decisions which affect the quality of the human environment." 2. The Marine Corps, in the subsequent actions after the release of this document did not comply with NEPA regulations, did not encourage and facilitate public involvement, therefore this document and the public comment period have been irrevocably tainted by this violation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. The Marine Corps understands the public's concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5 of the EIS). Please see

Chapter 4 of the EIS for further information on the expected impacts on both the human and desert environment.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

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| <b>Comment ID</b> | 2333                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Last Name</b>  | Granat                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>First Name</b> | Amy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Comment</b>    | Comment #1: Marine Corps fails to establish Purpose and Need At the May 25th, 2011 meeting of the OHMVR Commission, representatives of the Marine Corps, including Project Manager Chris Proudfoot, stated to the commissioners and members of the public present, that the entire need for the proposed expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV area could be succinctly summed up in one word "Safety". Yet in the DEIS, under the Purpose and Need in the Executive Summary, the word "safety" is not mentioned once. Instead, the Purpose and Need as defined on page ES-1 describes a scenario wherein the Marines must fulfill 'Marine Corps Strategy 21', a strategy paper released on November 3, 2000. In that paper, Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) are described as; "...our premier response force for smaller-scale [emph.ad.] contingencies that are so prevalent in today's security environment" . This document describes both a Marine Corps already trained as one of the finest fighting forces in the world, ready to operate at a moment's notice, and a Service working to "...evolve our warfighting concepts to enhance our ability to participate as partner in joint and allied concept development..." and "...enhance capabilities to operate in urban and austere environments ...". Words |

like "interoperability", "coalition" and "allied forces" are used often to illustrate the need to work together with the other Services to enhance responsiveness to military emergencies. But that course of action, training to the needs of smaller scale contingencies, is not mentioned in the DEIS, because this would be inconsistent with the proposed expansion of the current base. The proposed expansion will not fulfill the need to partner with other Services, and an expansion of training area will not serve to enhance coalitions, amphibious response, or a number of other military strategies as outlined in this report. Marine Corps Strategy 21 also talks about the need to "...capitalize on innovation, experimentation and technology..." as a critical part of future training. These points are all inconsistent with the Purpose and Need as stated in the DEIS, and do not support the expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Area. This presents a fatal flaw in this document, without a provable Purpose and Need the document fails to establish the reasoning behind the displacement of the large amount of the public who enjoy the Johnson Valley OHV Area, for which there is no other comparable option, and the detriment to the quality of life of the local valley residents. The Marines have chosen certain elements of the aforementioned strategy paper, while ignoring other components of that paper, and have not established a valid Purpose and Need, therefore this project must be withdrawn. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

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| <b>Comment ID</b> | 2334                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Last Name</b>  | Granat                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>First Name</b> | Amy                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Comment</b>    | Comment #2: The Marine Corps have failed to consider reasonable alternatives, including the No Action Alternative. It is well known that this project has been considered since 2002, yet the Marines have failed to consider new information that has been released since that time. Per CEQ the DEIS ; "...all reasonable alternatives, which must be rigorously explored and objectively evaluated..." Cooperating with the U. S. Army, and co-use of the area already occupied by Fort Irwin would give the Marines a chance to partner with another arm of the Service, and work on 'joint and allied concept development', )as required by Marine Strategy Paper 21) yet that alternative, which would be consistent with the No Action Alternative (as required by NEPA) was not seriously considered in the DEIS. In fact there is no mention of the No-Action Alternative in the document as far as the analysis, nor has there been any representation of the No- Action Alternative, to the public or at public meetings. The No-Action Alternative as defined by CEQ is;"...involving federal decisions on proposals for |

projects. "No action" in such cases would mean the proposed activity would not take place, and the resulting environmental effects from taking no action would be compared with the effects of permitting the proposed activity or an alternative activity to go forward." 2 There has been no serious consideration that the proposed action is not warranted given new facts that have emerged, and no serious discussion has ever been undertaken with the Marines that have allowed that possibility, as suggested by the public many times, to move forward. CORVA finds this a violation in letter and spirit of the NEPA and the public trust. As written by the CEQ; "...it is difficult to think of a situation where it would not be appropriate to address a "no action" alternative. Accordingly, the regulations require the analysis of the no action alternative even if the agency is under a court order or legislative command to act". There is no excuse for the non-existence and non-consideration of the No-Action Alternative, and as this is a serious flaw in the document, the Marines must re-examine the alternative by issuing a supplemental document. If there is no supplemental document released, the Marines must insert a statement into the Final Environmental Impact Statement confirming the fact that they have been asked to review the project and consider the No Action Alternative, but they have failed to take this alternative into consideration.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS. The EIS does consider and analyze the No Action

Alternative, for each subject area. Under the No Action Alternative there would be no land acquisition and conditions as outlined in Chapter 3 of the EIS would, in general, be expected to continue into the future.

**Comment ID** 2335

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #3: The Marine Corps have failed to consider current training strategies. Strategies in training have advanced since 2002, the initiation of consideration of the proposed expansion, and the current date. During the presentation at the May 25th OHMVR Commission meeting in Ontario, Project Manager Chris Proudfoot was asked about the fiscal responsibility needed to be considered by the Marines as it pertains to the proposed expansion. Mr Proudfoot answered that he had no need to consider any fiscal measures as concerns the proposed expansion. But the commanding general of the Marine Corps Combat Development Command, Lt. Gen. George J. Flynn, recently spoke to the media about his serious concerns of fiscal difficulties facing the Marines. According to an article on the Marine website; "...Flynn discussed how the re-shaping of the Marine Corps reflects our historic role as the nation's crisis response force and provides unique capabilities to the joint force in terms readiness, adaptability, flexibility and utility at an affordable cost."1 Clearly Lt. Gen. Flynn recognizes the need for fiscal responsibility and is calling for a reduction in ground combat forces including infantry, cannon artillery battalions, and armor. Lt. Gen. Flynn furthermore calls for the 'maritime soul' of the Marine Corps to be preserved. As the Johnson Valley OHV area is in the middle of the desert, and maritime activities would be exceedingly difficult. In reading the other comments by Lt. Gen. Flynn, there has been a recommendation by the Marine Corps Force Structure Review that there is a need for reduction in force structure considering the fiscally constrained, post-Operation Enduring Freedom-Afghanistan environment. While it is clear that Lt. Gen. Flynn understand the conditions existing circa 2002 are not mirrored in 2011 and beyond, there is no evidence in this document that these concerns are noted. The plans to expand the 29Palms Marine base do not take into account current strategies indicated by their own commanders, no do they take into account current fiscal conditions. The proposed expansion counters the statements of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates, when he was quoted as saying that the country does not need another land army, but forces that can deploy quickly and sustain themselves for a short period of time. Nothing in this document takes these new strategies into account, and appears that the very leaders the Marine Corps depend upon for guidance have issued a clear mandate that counters the need for the proposed

expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Area. Because current wartime strategies clearly illustrate that this expansion is not needed, this document must be withdrawn and this proposed expansion abandoned.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps has determined that Alternatives 4, 5, and 6 (all of which provide for Restricted Public Access to some or all of the acquired land area approximately 10 months of the year) are feasible alternatives that would allow it to meet at least the minimum identified training requirement. If one of these alternatives is selected by the Department of the Navy and approved by Congress, the Marine Corps would be required to implement the selected alternative as described in the Final EIS or they would be legally required to comply with the NEPA process to assess potential impacts of some other course of action. Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2336

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment**

Comment #4: The Marines Corps failed to analyze all cumulative impacts. Inconsidering cumulative impacts, the Marine Corps failed to consider the impact from displaced off-highway vehicle recreational use on other areas in California as part of the needed analysis. As stated in section 5.3 in the DEIS; "Reasonably foreseeable future actions that may have impacts additive to the effects of the proposed action are also analyzed." It is reasonable to consider that those who already own off-road vehicles, and those that enjoy off-road recreation, will continue to enjoy these activities, but the significant effects to other areas because of the displacement of off-road recreation are not analyzed nor considered. This presents a fatal flaw in the document. As opposed to other analyses, which may be locally based, this analysis must spread out to the other OHV areas around Southern California to determine if those areas can absorb the thousands of additional recreation enthusiasts that will visit after the Johnson Valley OHV Area is substantially closed. The impact on Ocotillo Wells State Vehicular Recreation Area, El Mirage and Jawbone OHV Areas, and San Bernardino National Forest, to name a few areas that will be affected, have not been even identified as having potential impacts due to displaced recreation, yet it would be unreasonable to consider that they would not see a considerable increase in use. The safety and environmental impacts directly caused by the overcrowding that will definitely result from this proposed action are as yet unknown. With the preferred alternative, alternative 6, approximately two-thirds of the existing recreation area will be closed to all access, with arrangements for public access for the other one-third of Johnson Valley to be open on a permitted basis part of the year. The proposed permit process is unreasonable and untenable, it will require all visitors to obtain permits available off-site of the OHV area, prohibiting spontaneous use. Therefore any chance of continued use of the remaining area, when it is available to the public, will be considerably impaired. This DEIS represents an incomplete analysis of both the existing recreational use of Johnson Valley, and the effects of the displacement of recreational use at the Johnson Valley OHV Area. Because this analysis is incomplete, if this project is to continue, a supplemental analysis must be completed to correctly determine the true effects of the proposed action. If this is not undertaken, please state in the Final EIS that the effects of displaced recreation have not been completely analyzed, and may cause considerable difficulty and environmental harm to the remaining OHV areas.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response**

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The

analysis presented in Section 4.2 acknowledges and discusses the impacts that reduced access to recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage in other areas and potential overcrowding. As discussed in the EIS, implementation of the proposed action is likely to result in an increase in illegal riding in the form of trespass on BLM, state, or private lands (refer to Section 4.2). The potential for such illegal riding has been considered in the EIS; including potential adverse impacts on the Desert Tortoise (see Section 4.10). The EIS also evaluates several special conservation measures (refer to Section 4.2.2.1) to reduce these potentially significant impacts. Additional information regarding impacts from displaced legal OHV use and the potential for illegal OHV use has been added to Section 4.2.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2337

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #5: The Marines Corps failed to analyze all cultural heritage. Thousands of recreation enthusiasts currently visit Johnson Valley every year as they have done for over 60 years. Races of various types are a cultural heritage, yet they have not been identified as such in the DEIS. California State Office of Historic Preservation recognizes that historical events that shape the distinctive character of areas are eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources. The longevity and history of California off-road racing is inextricably tied to the Johnson Valley OHV Area, and has significantly contributed to the make-up of the surrounding desert communities. The loss of this cultural treasure has not be analyzed in the DEIS, and the complete destruction of this cultural activity has not been considered. This is a fatal omission from the DEIS, therefore the document must be withdrawn. If the Marines do not reconsider the inappropriateness of the expansion into the Johnson Valley OHV Area, a supplemental DEIS must be prepared that directly analyzes that cultural loss that will result from the proposed action.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Historic Preservation is covered under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Identification and evaluation of Historic Properties covers the first step in the Section 106 process. Historic Property means "any prehistoric or historic district, site, building, structure or object included in or eligible for inclusion in, the National Register of Historic Places" [16 U.S.C.470w(5)]. The five types of properties eligible for the National Register of Historic Places are: 1. Buildings; 2. Structures; 3. Sites (archeological sites, either historic or prehistoric); 4. Districts, and 5. Objects. The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, material workmanship, feeling and association. Races are important to the OHV community, but they do not meet the criteria of being considered historic properties. They are not unique, are not associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; are not associated with the lives of persons significant in our past; do not embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; nor have they yielded or are likely to yield information important in prehistory or history [36 CFR 60.4].

**Comment ID** 2338

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Clayton

**Comment** (Part 1 of Comment Letter - Clayton Miller) May 25, 2011 Via Email Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest ATTN: Twentynine Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, California 92132- 5190 Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed Twentynine Palms Marine Base Expansion Dear Project Manager: I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training dated February 2011. I recognize the extensive amount of work and effort behind the preparation of the document. However, the DEIS contains a serious flaw that must be addressed and corrected before the analysis can be finalized. Screening Criteria is Flawed The DEIS describes that the Screening Criteria and alternatives used to systematically identify the range of reasonable alternatives carried forward for analysis were ratified by the project's Executive Steering Committee, which was comprised of Marine Corps leadership. The objective and threshold training requirements and generic MEB Exercise training template described in the DEIS directly

influenced the development and application of the screening criteria, which were used to identify and evaluate potential alternatives for the proposed action. To be considered a viable and reasonable alternative according to the screening committee, any land acquisition and airspace modification/establishment scenario must satisfy all of the established conditions (at least to a threshold level where appropriate). There are 8 screening criteria listed, and criteria number 5 specifies that the EIS will "Avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, cities/towns, and interstate highways." The DEIS however does not provide an explanation or justification as to why the decision of the Executive Steering Committee (i.e. Marine Corps) to avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas was established as a planning criteria. It simply states this determination, and this decision significantly influences and serves as the foundation for the development of the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS. At the same time, the screening criteria fails to include a condition to avoid areas in which congressional action will be required to remove from public use large portions of a federally managed Off-highway Vehicle Area (Johnson Valley OHV Area). No explanation or justification is given for this decision either. As a result, Alternatives 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were developed and include expansion scenarios into the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: 2383. Please see the response provided for that comment.

**Comment ID** 2339

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Clayton

**Comment** (Part 2 of Comment Letter - Clayton Miller) It would appear that screening criteria 5 is based on a political calculation of the Executive Steering Committee that the potential re-designation and withdrawal from public use of one type of land use (wilderness)(endnote 1) is not acceptable while the re-designation and withdrawal of another land use type is (a unique federally managed OHV area)(endnote 2). The withdrawal of federal lands from public use are decisions for Congress to ultimately make, not a federal department. Therefore, to examine a full range of potential alternatives for base expansion, the DEIS needs to be modified to include Screening Criteria for analysis that 1) also considers a withdrawal of a portion of a wilderness area(s) or 2) also removes from consideration any areas upon which future congressional action is required for the withdrawal of a significant portion

of federally managed OHV areas. Either of these approaches would level the playing field and treat each potential withdrawal equally, and thus allow a thorough review of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project that is not pre-decisional or prejudiced. To do otherwise is neither reasonable nor appropriate. Preferred Alternative 6 states "Access to and use of approximately 56% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be lost. This resource is unique to the region."(endnote 3) On the other hand, there are 3,878,113 acres of wilderness in California under BLM jurisdiction. Regionally, there are only 380,753 acres of BLM OHV Areas, representing approximately 62% of total BLM OHV Areas in the state. The loss of public access to Johnson Valley would be significant. Under Alternative 1, the loss of OHV acreage regionally available would be 47%; Alternative 2, 30%; Alternative 3, no loss; Alternative 4, 47%; Alternative 5, 47% and Alternative 6, 29%. Screening Criteria number 5 points the DEIS in a direction that will result in significant and adverse impacts and prevents other possible planning alternatives potentially much less so from moving forward. To correct this, the DEIS must address the flaw in the Screening Criteria described above. The public will benefit from review of additional alternatives as will the region and local communities that would be most affected by a base expansion. Thank you for your attention and consideration. Respectfully, Clayton Miller 1059 Amador Street Claremont, CA 91711 (909) 815-3780

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: 2383. Please see the response provided for that comment.

**Comment ID** 2340

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The draft EIS does nothing to fundamentally address issues around quality of life, cultural and social needs, air quality, effects on groundwater, native plants, animal species and noise nuisance for the residents of the 'Southern' aspect of the plan (or for anyone else for that matter). Most of the EIS topics stem from a somewhat slanted or misinformed view of what is important and many issues are glossed over as having little or no impact 'cos we say so'; 65 decibels for live fire and low flying aircraft really? Many residents moved to this area for the very qualities that will be lost in most alternative plans. What are the effects on a community (Twenty nine Palms) already suffering from an inability to form a viable and thriving downtown for residents and tourists other than a wasteland of tattoo

establishments, massage parlors and sketchy 'nightclubs'? Why isn't the impact on downtown 29 studied? There's a lot of noise about OHV constituents and their needs what about the needs of the Twenty nine Palms and Wonder Valley inhabitants or aren't they viable stakeholders? Not enough attention has been paid to the impact on environmental tourism, a very real option to ease the fiscal depression of this area. Where in this study is the impact on air quality of various munitions and wind drift? Where in this study are the plans for ongoing monitoring of adverse affects on the aforementioned? Who will enforce limits on noise or out of scheduled maneuvers activity, low flying aircraft, noise levels etc... the marines? Where is an independent voice? all the information is gathered by the military, assessed by the military and supposedly solved by the military, why no independent biological, social and cultural impact assessment? This (unfortunately) is not a convincing EIS this is a poster for a snow job and bureaucratic mumbo jumbo, there are no independent voices here only the soothing voices of the military. This is not a rant against the men and women of the armed forces, this about a sloppy and incredulous study and an affront to intelligent people who are expected to swallow it because supposedly they live in the middle of 'nowhere'.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders (including residents of Twentynine Palms and Wonder Valley) to ensure that their concerns were identified. Section 1.5 of the EIS includes an overview of the Environmental Review Process and includes Cooperating Agencies (BLM and FAA) for the preparation of the EIS, and the consultation and Coordination process with other federal and state agencies (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, State Historic Preservation Office, California Department of Fish and Game, Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District). The Marine Corps is committed to protection of the public and the environment and would continue to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws and regulations.

**Comment ID** 2341

**Last Name** Miller

**First Name** Clayton

**Comment** (Part 3 - Comment Letter submitted by Clayton Miller) (endnote 1) The BLM is responsible for 85 wilderness areas in California that total 3,878,113 acres. See [http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/wa\\_list.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/wa_list.html) (endnote 2)

Johnson Valley is the largest BLM managed OHV in California. Table 4.2-2 illustrates this point. Further information about BLM managed OHV Areas in California can also be found here. [http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm\\_special\\_areas/NLCS/summary\\_tables.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS/summary_tables.html) Table 4.2-2. Regional OHV Acreages Recreation Areas

**Date Comment Received**

**Response** Thank you for your comment. This letter is a duplicate to Comment ID: 2383. Please see the response provided for that comment.

**Comment ID** 2342

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I support the "no action" Alternative as the draft eir does not propose to replace the recreation land lost through this land acquisition especially those lands that are designated for off highway vehicle recreation.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

**Comment ID** 2343

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am opposed to the expansion of the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center.

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final

decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2344

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** We have attempted to upload comments this evening at approximately 8:40 pm on May 26, 2011. We have not received a confirmation that it has been uploaded. We have attempted this three times and are not sure they have been uploaded. Please contact me at: [phone number withheld for privacy] to confirm the comments have been uploaded. Thank you

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. This individual was contacted as requested and comment received. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2344 (Page 1 of 9)

Response to Comment 2344(Page 1 of 9):

Name Withheld by Request

May 26, 2011

Via: Electronic Mail – SMBPLMSWEBPAC@usmc.mil  
and  
U.S. Mail

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-519

Re: Draft ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT- Land Acquisition  
and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale MAGTF  
Live-Fire and Maneuver Training at the Marine Corps Air  
Ground Combat Center, Twentynine Palms, CA

Product Manager:

**PLEASE TAKE NOTICE:** the Partnership for Johnson Valley  
("PFJV"), a division of the California Trail Users  
Coalition ("CTUC")<sup>1</sup> hereby submit its comments to the above  
referenced Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") via  
Notice included on pages 10583-10584 of the **Federal**  
**Register**, Volume 76, Number 38 (Friday, February 25, 2011).

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<sup>1</sup> The mission statement of the PFJV is *Our Mission is to unite the many people  
who enjoy the diverse activities available in the multiple-access area of  
Johnson Valley.*

*Our charter is to promote responsible recreation and the use of desert  
resources through conservation and education. The goal of the Partnership is  
to ensure public open access to the area in the present, and for the future  
generations who live, work, and recreate in Johnson Valley.*

Comment ID: 2344 (Page 2 of 9)

Response to Comment 2344(Page 2 of 9):

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Said Notice was amended on Friday, May 13, 2011 in the *Federal Register*.<sup>2</sup>

The PFVJ comments are authorized under the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 United States Code (“USC”) § 4321-4347 as implemented by the Presidents Council on Environmental Quality at Title 40 of the Code of Federal Regulations (“CFR”) § 1503.1(a)(4)

As provided for by NEPA, we request our comments to be included in the Project File and all comments be addressed in the Final EIS.

I. DEIS Format Errors

The DEIS “cover sheet” does not follow the NEPA Regulations with regard to format. The Abstract is to be one paragraph and contains four paragraphs. See 40 CFR § 1502.11(e)

The cover sheet also fails to provide “the date by which comments must be received.” See 40 CFR § 1502.11 (f)

Further, the DEIS fails to provide an address to where the public can send their comments. Only when one reads the Frequently Asked Questions portion of the USMC 29 Palms web site does the reviewer find a place to send its comments.

Since indeed the DEIS is the only document that the public is entitled to provide comments to, the omission in the DEIS of a place to send comments to is a fatal error.

Such basic defects cause the document to become difficult to follow and deficient from potential legal challenges.

The DEIS should be withdrawn, corrected, and resubmitted to the public for review and comment.

II. Public Notice

We discovered that the *Federal Register* (Friday, February 25, 2011) Notice of Availability of this Statement provides that the public comment period ended April 11, 2011. The said Notice is in conflict with Press-Release No: PR-

NEPA-1

NEPA-2

NEPA-3

**NEPA-1:** Thank you for your comment. The Final EIS will have a cover sheet that follows the CEQ requirements in 40 CFR 1502.11. As for the abstract, a document of this size justifies more than one paragraph.

**NEPA-2:** The Marine Corps notified Federal, state, and local agencies, Tribal representatives, interested organizations, and the public of the availability of the Draft EIS, the public comment period, and the methods by which to submit comments. In accordance with CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1506.6, the Marine Corps has made diligent effort to notify the public of the Draft EIS and public comment period, including mailings to persons and organizations with a known interest in the proposed action (including the PFJV), news releases, and public meetings. The Marine Corps has accepted public comments through several ways, including through the project web site, mail (at both the NAVFACSW and Combat Center addresses), and at the public meetings. The Marine Corps received 21,583 comments on the Draft EIS.

<sup>2</sup> See page 28029, *Federal Register*, Volume 76, Number 93, (Friday, May 13, 2011)

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110224NMI as it provides for the comment period ending May 26, 2011.

The issue cited above, is now compounded by fact that the USMC has submitted to a second Notice published in the **Federal Register**:

*EIS No. 20110051, Draft EIS, USN, CA, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Project, Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale MAGTF Live-Fire and Maneuver Training Facility, San Bernardino County, CA, Comment Period Ends: 05/26/2011, Contact: Chris Proudfoot 760 830 3764.*

*Revision of FR Notice Published 02/24/2011: Extending Comment Period from 04/11/2011 to 05/26/2011.*

Of particular concern to the Partnership is the provision of "Extending Comment Period". It is our assertion that the USMC has published this later Notice as a correction rather than an extension.

Moreover, as of the writing of these comments, the USMC web site for the expansion does not include the Revision Notice, nor a press release, of the revised Notice published in the Federal Register on Friday, May 13, 2011.

Since indeed the **Federal Register** Notice is the only legal Notice of the USMC's intent of this document, the public is now confused and may have not submitted comments after this April due date.

The Partnership asserts that as a part of the process of NEPA, Marine Corps 29 Palms is in error in that:

- Committed an error regarding providing accurate information as to where the public is to send its comments to the DEIS.
- When preparing its website and public documents for the Twentynine Palms Marine Base proposed expansion, the Marines neglected to give the correct mailing address for public comments on the home page of the website, and it is missing from all the public documents including:
  1. The Project Briefing Paper
  2. The Project Overview

NEPA-3

Response to Comment 2344(Page 3 of 9):

**NEPA-3:** The Marine Corps filed the Draft EIS with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Federal Activities in accordance with 40 CFR 1506.9, and EPA's EIS filing guidelines. EPA publishes the Notice of Availability in the Federal Register and initially calculated the public comment period based on the minimum 45-day comment period. EPA also filed the subsequent revision to the Federal Register Notice.

The Marine Corps appropriately notified agencies, interested organizations, and the public of the Draft EIS availability, the 90-day public comment period (twice the minimum), date public comments were due, and methods to submit comments. The Marine Corps informed the public through mailings, notices in local newspapers, news releases, and website postings. The Marine Corps also published a notice of the public meetings and public comment period in the Federal Register on March 1, 2011 (see 76 FR 11216).

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Response to Comment 2344 (Page 4 of 9):

29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
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- 3. The Public Info Brief
- 4. The Tri-fold Brochure
- 5. The Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)
- 6. The Contact
- 7. The Public Comment Link on the homepage
- Instead, the contact information is given only for the project office on the USMC 29Palms Marine Base. The Project Manager, Mr. Chris Proudfoot, has been made aware of this problem, and has not responded to requests for an extension of time to submit comments; and an investigation to find out how many public comments have been sent to the wrong address; what has been done with those comments; and what can be done to rectify a mistake that has existed since the release of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.
- NEPA requires and encourages public comment, and the Marines have not given the public the information needed to send in their comments.
- Even the Cover Sheet required under NEPA for the DEIS contains the inaccurate address cited above.
- While indeed the USMC amended the first **Federal Register** Notice on May 13, 2011 to provide the correct date comments were due, the Notice did not admit the error. Instead, the USMC provided as rationale for the amended Notice that they were "Extending Comment Period from 04/11/2011 to 05/26/2011". It is clear that there was indeed an error and the USMC is not accurate to the public about the error.

NEPA-3

**NEPA-4:** Table 3.1-1 provides the acreage, use, and constraints on Combat Center ranges. Appendix B provides further background information on the ranges. For example, the Acorn Training Area (17,463 acres), the Sandhill Training Area (16,786 acres), and the West Training Area (10,621 acres) do not support live-fire training.

As discussed in Section 1.4.3, several constraints (not just resource conservation) limit mechanized live fire and maneuver training on almost 60% of the Combat Center. These constraints include steep topography, dry lake beds that become impassable when wet, volcanic rock outcrop areas, groundwater/aquifer recharge zones, sensitive plant communities, special status fauna, ecological sites, cultural resource sites, and other areas designated for controlled access and no live fires due to operational restrictions and safety requirements. These areas are classified as "No-Go" and "Caution" areas in terms of vehicle mobility for training.

**III. Purpose and Need**

(a) The DEIS fails to disclose the existing acreage or square miles of "resource conservation or other reasons" that drive the statement of rationale to not use the property on the present 29 Palms facility for exercises envisioned in this document. See 1.3.2, Page 1-8.

NEPA-4

We have reviewed appendix B for the restrictions cited in 1.4.3 and cannot find any reference to the "biological and cultural resources" in the existing facility that preclude

The Combat Center has a high range utilization where each range is currently fully scheduled.

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utilization of these areas for the maneuvers envisioned in the DEIS.

Without this vital information, the reviewer is left with an incomplete picture of existing land use designations. In turn, the reviewer cannot properly assess the need for expansion when they are not made aware of the existing facility use.

The DEIS should be revised to give the reviewer an adequate understanding of the existing management of the facility.

(b) The “background” discussion (pg 1-8 of Section 1.3.2) provides that the Combat Center, even with the proposed expansion, does not meet the MEB training requirements as it does not “... does not provide littoral sea space”.

This admission, in of it self, is telling considering that the USMC finds that this proposed project will not accomplish its own training requirements.

Thus the public is left with a question as to why this project is moving forward.

The DEIS under this section begs to be further explain why the USMC desires to move forward given the circumstances cited above.

(c) The “Current Training Areas and Assets” (pg 1-16 of Section 1.4.3) provides the Combat Center has existing “environmental conservation areas”. The reviewer of the DEIS is directed at page 1-12 to refer to Appendix B for “... a more detailed description” of these areas.

We have reviewed the Appendix cited above for such information and cannot find where and the size of, such conservation areas.

The DEIS fails to disclose to the public this vital information so that the reviewer has an understanding that the Purpose and Need of this DEIS is on solid foundation.

The DEIS should be revised to reflect (without sending the reviewer to another document) this information.

NEPA-4

NEPA-5

NEPA-6

Response to Comment 2344(Page 5 of 9):

**NEPA-5:**

As explained on page 1-8, there is no place in the United States that meets the ideal sea, air, and land range requirements for MEB-size live-fire and maneuver training. An expanded Combat Center comes closest to meeting the ideal air and land range requirements and does meet the threshold MEB training requirements described on page 2-4.

**NEPA-6:** Environmental conservation areas refers to protected sites such as groundwater/aquifer recharge zones, with sensitive plant communities, special status fauna, ecological sites, and cultural resource sites. These areas are discussed in EIS Section 3.10 and in the Combat Center’s 2007 Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP). Specifically, conservation areas for the Desert Tortoise are discussed on pages 3.10-22 to 3.10-26. The INRMP details the Combat Center’s natural resources management program which is designed to conserve natural resources and outlines measures needed to comply with environmental laws and regulations. The INRMP helps ensure that natural resources conservation measures and Marine Corps activities on mission land are integrated and consistent with federal stewardship requirements. The INRMP and other pertinent documents are incorporated into the EIS by reference in accordance with 40 CFR 1502.21, and are available electronically on the Internet at [www.marines.mil/unit/logistics/Documents/LFL/LFL-1/NaturalResources/Plans/MCAGCCTwentyninePalms/29Palms\\_INRMP-07.pdf.pdf](http://www.marines.mil/unit/logistics/Documents/LFL/LFL-1/NaturalResources/Plans/MCAGCCTwentyninePalms/29Palms_INRMP-07.pdf.pdf).

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(d) The "Results of Scoping" section related to the "screening criteria" (pg. 1-36 of Section 1.5.2.4) is flawed in that it limited the range of alternatives proposed by the public (expansion to the east - including lands currently in the National Wilderness Preservation System) by an arbitrary decision by the Executive Steering Committee.

The DEIS is flawed in that it does not disclose when the criteria was developed and violates NEPA for failure to "Rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives" See 40 CFR § 1502.14 (a)

Given the above, this EIS is part of a legislative proposal, and such a decision by the Committee to preclude this option appears to be politically driven as opposed to the requirements under NEPA.

We cannot find anywhere in the DEIS a reasonable explanation nor rational of this decision by the Committee. No Congress is bound to any previous Act of another Congress. If this expansion proposal included this option as an alternative, the ultimate decision maker of the preferred alternative may decide to reject it. But to not include this option leave the reviewer lost as to why the Committee would not provide for the option and disclose it's rational for rejection.

NEPA requires the agency to: "include reasonable alternatives not within the jurisdiction of the lead agency." See 40 CFR § 1502.14(c)

Further, the DEIS for this project brings trepidation to the PFUV in that the same rejects a viable alternative. This approach of dismissing a viable alternative in the DEIS once again, appears out of sequence with the commands of NEPA<sup>3</sup>

It is the contention of the PFUV that the DEIS has unlawfully precluded an alternative brought forward by the public and this alternative should have been explored in

NEPA-7

**NEPA-7:** The Marine Corps appropriately evaluated a range of reasonable alternatives along with other alternatives which were eliminated from detailed study. Reasonable alternatives include those that are practical or feasible from the technical and economic standpoint. The Marine Corps does not consider an alternative that involves Congressionally-designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, cities/towns, and interstate highways to be reasonable from a technical and economic standpoint, and were not studied in detail in the EIS.

<sup>3</sup> Until an agency issues a record of decision as provided in section 1505.2 (except as provided in paragraph (c) of this section, no action concerning the proposal shall be taken which would: (2) Limit the choice of reasonable alternatives. See 40 CFR Part 1506.1(a)

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the DEIS. Thus, the DEIS fails under the “Hard Look Doctrine” established by the Court.

As such, the Supplemental DEIS must be developed and circulated to the public for review and comment.

(e) The DEIS additionally has a fatal flaw as it fails to accurately disclose vital information so that the public might be able to comment.

This Draft EIS was prepared in compliance with NEPA of 1969 (42 USC §§ 4321-4370h); and the CEQ Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508)...

... Concurrently, a Notice of Availability of the Draft EIS was announced in the *Federal Register*, local newspapers, and on the project website (see Appendix C, *Public Involvement*). This notice indicates locations (e.g., public libraries) where the Draft EIS can be reviewed, the duration of the public review and comment period, the address where comments can be sent, and the time and location of the public meetings. The public meetings provide an opportunity for interested parties to comment on the content of the Draft EIS and form the basis for making subsequent changes in the Final EIS. [Emph. Added]

There can be no dispute as the record is very clear. The Notice of Availability included on pages 10583-10584 of the *Federal Register*, Volume 76, Number 38 (Friday, February 25, 2011) does not “indicate” any of the emphasized provisions of the Notice

Considering such a serious breach of vital information that is inaccurately portrayed in the DEIS, the Partnership finds it in the public interest to withdraw the DEIS and revise it to include information including providing a new Notice of Availability of this DEIS.

**IV. Conclusion**

For rationale cited above, the Partnership procedural errors that are not in keeping with NEPA and public notice requirements related to the same. As such, we require this DEIS to be withdrawn, corrections made, and re-submitted to the public for its comments.

We wish to be provided to the above address, for the Partnership, to be informed of any future documents related to this expansion proposal. This includes, but is not limited to: a supplemental DEIS, any Final DEIS, and any related Record of Decision.

NEPA-7

NEPA-8

GEN-1

**NEPA-8:** The excerpt of the EIS refers to the Federal Register Notice filed by the Marine Corps on March 1, 2011 (see 76 FR 11216). The Marine Corps appropriately notified agencies, interested organizations (including the PFJV), and the public of the Draft EIS availability, the 90-day public comment period, and methods to submit comments through mailings, notices in local newspapers, news releases, and website postings. The Marine Corps received 21,583 comments on the Draft EIS.

**GEN-1:** Thank you for your comments. In accordance with CEQ regulations at 40 CFR 1506.6, the Marine Corps has made diligent effort to notify the public, including mailings to persons and organizations with a known interest in the proposed action, news releases, and public meetings. The Marine Corps has accepted public comments through several ways, including through the project web site, via fax, mail, and at the public meetings. The Partnership is already on the Marine Corps mailing list to receive a copy of project documents.

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Response to Comment 2344(Page 8 of 9):

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We further request that we are sent printed copies of the  
aforementioned documents so that we may continue our  
involvement in this proposal.

We are transmitting these comments by the date due of today  
via electronic mail. Given these comments are received via  
the Project web site as an attachment, they are considered  
timely. As it is past time to send them postmarked today,  
we will be sending our printed comments via US mail  
tomorrow.

GEN-1

Respectfully Submitted:

//s//

**Comment ID: 2344 (Page 9 of 9)**

**Response to Comment 2344(Page 9 of 9):**

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**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2345

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED TORTOISE

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

Comment ID: 2345 (Page 1 of 4)

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285  
760-364-2646 e-mail: ranchotaj@gmail.com

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 26, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

Since the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement means it requires a lot of time to study and assimilate; and since there are still stakeholders who are only now hearing of the expansion plans; and since there is confusion as to lack of correct information where to address public comments, calling into question the Marines' good-faith efforts to elicit those comments, **it is requested that the public comment period for the Draft EIS be extended at least another 60 days.**

This comment concerns the Desert Tortoise

The DEIS goes into great detail about special conservation measures now taken to help mitigate the loss of Desert Tortoises due to training and other activities on the Marine Air Ground Combat Center as it is today.

The Bureau of Land Management website states: *"The desert tortoise is listed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a threatened species. Under the provisions of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), anyone who takes (the term "take" means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in any such conduct) a tortoise is subject to civil and/or criminal penalties of up to a \$50,000 fine and one year in jail, or both. BLM assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the enforcement of the Act. The desert tortoise is also considered by California to be a threatened species with associated penalties."*

The DEIS says the training of Marine and other personnel regarding the legal status of the tortoise would include the definition of "take" and associated penalties. However, the DEIS does not detail what penalties, if any, the Marine Corps have been paying.

Page 1 of 4  
Comment

Response to Comment 2345 (Page 1 of 4):

The Marine Corps holds an incidental take permit for the desert tortoise that addresses existing training activities on the Combat Center. The Marine Corps consulted with the USFWS and received a Biological Opinion and incidental take permit for the preferred alternative (see Appendix O in the Final EIS). These permits, which include numerous and extensive terms and conditions that the Marine Corps must adhere to, allow the Marine Corps to "take" tortoises up to a certain number per year, without paying additional penalties or fees.

The relocation referred to in the Special Conservation Measures pertains to simple movement of individual tortoises generally a few hundred feet to move them out of immediate harm (e.g., off of a road). However, as part of Endangered Species Act Section 7 consultation with the USFWS, the Marine Corps is developing a translocation plan that will provide more specifics on potential future efforts to relocate tortoises out of harm's way prior to training exercises. The Tortoise Research and Captive Rearing Site (TRACRS) referred to in your comment has had excellent success to date in hatching and rearing juvenile tortoises; however the program is still experimental and the first release of captive-reared tortoises occurred in 2011. It is too soon to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, but it has provided promising results to date.

The costs of implementing the special conservation measures is not relevant for a NEPA analysis. The Marine Corps will provide adequate funding to comply with all terms and conditions resulting from formal consultation with USFWS and other oversight agencies.

The Marine Corps has not identified specific times of year when MEB Exercises would occur, in order to provide maximum flexibility to commanders when designing exercises. The analysis of impacts in the Draft EIS therefore does not presume timing of

**Comment ID: 2345 (Page 2 of 4)**

A mine operator in Johnson Valley told us if he caused the death of a tortoise, he was subject to penalties of \$100,000. Each.

The DEIS indicates that plans are to explode more than a million rounds of munitions ground-to-ground and more than 1.5 million rounds air-to-ground during the various exercises each year. As it also clearly states that this will significantly impact the Desert Tortoise, it must also make clear what penalties will be paid, and who is to assess them. The BLM assists the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service in the enforcement of the Endangered Species Act. The desert tortoise is also considered by California to be a threatened species with associated penalties. The DEIS must make clear if these will still apply in the military expansion areas.

The DEIS states that biologists authorized by the US Fish and Wildlife Service survey for tortoises before training and construction activities, and move the tortoises and eggs out of harm's way. The DEIS does not, however, state the survival rate of the tortoises who are relocated out of their established territories, whose burrows are dug up and whose eggs are moved. It also does not state the success rate of the current efforts by the Marines to protect the young tortoises until they are old enough to survive on their own. It also does not report on the success rate of similar rescue efforts carried out by other military installations and other organizations. The lack of information concerning relocation success, etc., calls into question the validity of even mentioning the current special conservation measures. It may be assumed they have some value other than lip service to the goal of preserving the Desert Tortoise, but the document must spell out that value, if informed judgements are to be made as to Base expansion plans.

The DEIS does not state the costs to the taxpayer of these special conservation measures, worthy though they may be. It does not state future costs for these special conservation measures if any of the expansion plans are put into place. The omissions must be corrected; and it must be made clear they were not in the draft document.

The BLM website also informs us: *"Like other reptiles, the desert tortoise is cold-blooded. To survive in the desert, the tortoise estivates (remains underground in its burrow) during the hottest times of the day during the summer and hibernates (sleeps underground in its burrow) during the cold of winter. Tortoises come out in the spring to eat grasses and wildflowers and drink water from the spring rains (although they obtain most of their water from the plants they eat). Also in spring, they socialize and look for mates. At other times of the year, they are less active above ground."*

The DEIS mentions the time of year when desert tortoises are active, but no mention can be found of the time of year that the twice-yearly training exercises will be held, or if any effort will be made to avoid the tortoise springtime emergence, during which time they are able to feed on the most nutritious plants in order to survive the desert heat and cold successfully for the rest of the year. The document is therefore incomplete, and must be modified to specify if training exercises will be concurrent with the emergence of the tortoise.

Page 2 of 4  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2345 (Page 2 of 4):**

exercises, and impacts to tortoises could occur at any time including during springtime emergence from brumation.

Uncertainty is inherent in estimates of population density, especially for cryptic species such as the desert tortoise that spend much of their lives underground. The surveys conducted to estimate tortoise density in the proposed acquisition areas represent the current "state of the art", were developed in coordination with the USFWS, and are the best available information on which to base estimates of density and quantitative impacts. Please refer to response to comment N-18713 BIO-2.

Please refer to response to comment N-18713 BIO-1 regarding noise and vibration impacts to the desert tortoise. The limited information that is available regarding responses of tortoises to noise and vibration (Bowles et al. 1999) suggests that they are not particularly sensitive to vibration from aircraft overflight and sonic booms, and return quickly to normal activities after disturbance. It is expected that noise and vibration would have adverse effects on some tortoises and would result in take. The Marine Corps consulted with the USFWS to identify mitigation required to offset the impacts of the proposed action on desert tortoises.

The Draft EIS does not state that cessation of public access under certain alternatives would wholly or even largely offset the impacts of the proposed military training. However, the impacts of OHVs on desert ecosystems has been well documented, and ceasing OHV activity on these lands would be a beneficial effect to biological resources. Please refer to response to comment N-00415 BIO-1 regarding relative impacts of OHV activity versus military training.

Comment ID: 2345 (Page 3 of 4)

Response to Comment 2345 (Page 3 of 4):

The DEIS states in no uncertain terms the harrowing truth, “Wheeled and tracked vehicles could crush tortoises during vehicle convoys, and in staging and assembly areas. Tortoises could also be crushed or buried as a result of temporary construction, excavation and earth-moving activities, temporary bivouacs, helicopter landings, and the movement of Marines on foot.”

What seems to be very uncertain however are the estimates of how many tortoises make their home currently in the various expansion areas under study. Previous biological studies are cited, some of which are contradictory, and estimates of Desert Tortoise “take” are wide ranging. “The wide range reported for potential take of desert tortoises is related to the uncertainty in estimating desert tortoise density.”

It also states, “This discrepancy may be due to actual differences in tortoise abundance between 2002 and 2008, differences in surveyor capability, or techniques employed.” Such maybe’s are not science and have no place in a document meant to guide opinion as to the merits of the Base expansion. If further studies are not undertaken to clarify this confusion, the Marines are remiss in submitting this document, and it cannot be construed as fulfilling NEPA requirements. Therefore the document is flawed.

For example: Table 4.10-2. “Estimated Take of Desert Tortoises from Military Training under the Six Action Alternatives” shows that for the Marines’ preferred Alternative 6, which includes the west study area (Johnson Valley), tortoise take ranges between a low of 154 to a high of 714, estimated over a 50-year project lifetime. The reader wondering what this means (154 per year? 154 per year average?) and how the numbers were arrived at, is referred to Appendix I of this already enormous document for methodology. As a basis for judgement on the military threat to an endangered species, this confusion and uncertainty are not acceptable. The DEIS must clarify, not only the tables, but the methodology without having to refer to an appendix. The preparers of the document must have an up-to-date and credible study to cite. Otherwise this flaw may well lead to the situation reported below concerning another recent EIS:

“**Solar threat**” (Riverside Press-Enterprise, 5/6/11)

Editorial: *“The discovery of far more desert tortoises than expected near a planned solar power plant in the Mojave Desert should prompt federal officials to rethink the project. And the incident should spur federal officials to require independent environmental studies before bulldozers roll on future solar projects. Last week, a U.S. Bureau of Land Management assessment found the \$2.1 billion BrightSource Energy Co. project near Primm, Nev., would disturb up to 3,000 tortoises and kill as many as 700 young ones. That far exceeds an estimate of 32 of the threatened species at the site...”*

For “bulldozers” read “tanks. If a similar underestimation of the tortoise population in the expansion areas has occurred in the studies the Marines are citing, the Marines’ DEIS does not address who will have oversight; whether the US Department of the Interior (DOI), the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), or the California Desert District can issue such a Temporary Suspension of Activities to the Department of the Navy, when and if the Bureau of Land Management no longer is managing the land.

Comment ID: 2345 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment 2345 (Page 4 of 4):

Tortoises will be bombed, run over and their habitat destroyed. This would not be allowed to occur on such a scale anywhere else for any reason. The explosions are planned for two one-month training exercises each year. The DEIS admits, "Although it has not yet been demonstrated through experimentation, increased stress levels in desert tortoises that could result from noise, human presence and activity, or periodic decreased air quality during planned military training exercises, could result in higher susceptibility to diseases, particularly Upper Respiratory Tract Disease. Stress can also result in voiding of the bladder (MAGTF Training Command 2010b). Since desert tortoises store much of their water in their bladders, this can lead to an increase in the potential for dehydration (Jørgensen 1998)."

The DEIS does not mention what trauma the tortoises will experience underground from the noise, vibration or seismic waves created by use of possible deep penetration or other bombing and gunfire during the combat training exercises. The trauma may prevent the tortoise from mating or nesting and have a further deleterious impact on their dwindling population, but no one has studied this, and it would seem cruel to inflict this trauma for study purposes. Studies made after the fact of live-fire training will be counting effects on individuals already injured beyond remediation.

On Page 711 a statement concerning off road activity on the west study area reads in part, "Although closure of most of the Johnson Valley OHV Area under this alternative would provide a substantial positive offset to the new military activity..."

This implies that the impact on wildlife, including the Desert Tortoise, of any motorcycle, quad, four-wheel-drive truck or buggy is comparable to the impact of a 68-ton Abrams tank, which can travel easily over desert terrain at a top speed of 40 mph. Even the impact of great numbers of OHVs over many years has not and will not compare to the Abrams and other heavy military vehicles in Marine Expeditionary Brigade-sized numbers engaged in live-fire air-ground combat maneuvers for 24 days twice a year, as well as other smaller training activities the rest of the year. This implication may not be questioned by the reader who knows little about either OHV or ground army activities. Therefore it is misleading, and must be deleted. Any comparison in the EIS between OHV activities and combat training must be very clear as to the impacts not only of the heavy armored vehicles and trucks, but the literal impacts of bombs and cannon fire.

Thank you for your attention,

Betty Munson

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2346

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED SHARED USE

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2346 (Page 1 of 4)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

Concerning the DEIS description of shared use of proposed expansion areas:

-Marine Expeditionary Brigade Exercises: 2 per year for 24 days each. Only non-dud producing ordnance in southern portion of west study area.  
-Restricted public access to southern portion of west study area (except for two 984 x 984-foot [300 x 300-meter] Company Objective areas) permitted approximately 10 months/year.

Three of the alternatives for expansion described in the DEIS include a Restricted Public Access Area (RPAA) to allow civilian recreational use to at least a remnant of the Johnson Valley Open Riding Area when military training activities are not being conducted.

The document states that “elements of many public comments (e.g., restricted public access when MEB Exercises are not occurring) have been incorporated into some alternatives carried forward for EIS analysis. Public comments influenced the development of the new Alternative 6. Similar to the Marine Corps’ intent with Alternatives 4 and 5 (formulated before scoping), the development of Alternative 6 is consistent with the public’s suggestion to: Allow for controlled periodic access for occasional public access and activities.”

It is difficult to believe that any member of the public who is used to free and open access to all of Johnson Valley actually used the words “controlled,” or “restricted.” “Periodic” might have been used to describe part-time access. “Restricted” also would have been understood to mean part-time access.

A RPAA is defined in the draft document as an area in which certain public uses may be permitted, subject to restrictions, institutional controls, and mitigating methods designed to provide for public safety.

Page 1 of 4  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2346 (Page 1 of 4):**

Thank you for your comment and input. The specific details on management of the RPAA in regards to permitting process, permits and fees for events in the RPAA, etc. have not been formalized at this time. If the alternative selected is one that would involve an RPAA a Recreation Management Plan would be developed that would address these details (see Section 4.2.5.4). While preparing the Recreation Management Plan, the Marine Corps would solicit input from the public, BLM, and other agencies.

The Marine Corps has kept the public informed as required by NEPA, including holding public scoping meetings before preparation of the Draft EIS, additional public meetings during the public review period for the Draft EIS, and encouraging the public to comment on the Draft EIS. In addition, the Marine Corps provided a 90-day public comment period for the Draft EIS, twice the minimum duration required by NEPA. The Marine Corps took additional steps to make the document publicly accessible for review and comment (e.g., project website, mailings, press releases, etc.). The Marine Corps has proactively reached out to interested stakeholders to ensure that their concerns were identified.

Consideration of indirect effects of the Proposed Action on the DoD budget and the National Deficit are outside the scope of this EIS analysis.

The Marine Corps understands the public’s concern in regards to safety on lands used by the Marine Corps for training purposes. Section 2.5 of the EIS outlines the measures that would be implemented under Alternative 4, 5, or 6. Included are a series of communication and notification procedures (modeled after BLM’s management plan for Johnson Valley) that would be implemented to increase public awareness, as well as pre- and post-exercise range control and management procedures that would enhance public safety.

**Comment ID: 2346 (Page 2 of 4)**

Already restrictions are multiplying far beyond the assumptions of the public, whose righteous indignation at being shut out of a recreational area set aside by the BLM in 1980, might have been reduced with the idea of shared use.

Being shut out of the area twice a year might seem reasonable, but:

“Access to and use of the area by the general public would only be authorized...when the land is not being utilized for training, and has been designated by the Commanding General as suitable for restricted activities to resume.”

“It is anticipated that the RPAA would be closed to the public twice yearly, for approximately 30 days each time. This would allow for required range preparation, execution of training, and range clearance and public access certification. These periods would be well advertised and published a minimum of 60 to 90 days in advance.”

This failure of the DEIS is, range clearance and certification by the Commanding General are only estimated to fall within the 30-day time period. Also, the DEIS does not address how any delays in certification would be advertised. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine how it would be possible to notify visitors, who could possibly already be en route, that unfortunately, for whatever reason, certification has been delayed (many visitors to Johnson Valley are still just finding out that the Marine Base expansion could exclude them from these traditional public lands).

Therefore, the document must clarify 1) that certification might be delayed indefinitely, and 2) advertising certification delays may not be effective, therefore causing a hardship on those who have traveled to Johnson Valley, with the consequences they may never come again, and they may go to other recreational areas. This would further add to the pressures on those areas already caused by permanent closure of other parts of Johnson Valley.

It is doubtful, given the historic 24-7 free access to the Johnson Valley Open Riding Area, that any person commenting in favor of shared use ever imagined that he or she could visit the RPAA only if all permit requirements and designated safety rules and use restrictions were followed.

Permitting for participants in organized events has been well established. But it is doubtful anyone dreamed that public access to the RPAA would require among other things:

1. each individual (or responsible adult for minors), certify that they have completed the required public education requirement. or:
2. in order to receive the required public education a person must have internet access, or travel to the location and hope to be allowed in.

These unqualified requirements evidently apply to a spectator at an event, as well as a participant; and to a visitor to the area for any purpose. There is no indication as to how long the permit is to be in effect, if there is to be any cost to the visitor, or what happens if the visitor comes to an access point for the permit after hours (unstated in the document). The permit plan must be thought out completely and the what-if's spelled out in the document, or the document must be changed to acknowledge these defects.

Page 2 of 4  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2346 (Page 2 of 4):**

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2346 (Page 3 of 4)

Response to Comment 2346 (Page 3 of 4):

The document states the public would be informed by several means that they cannot enter the Restricted Public Access Areas.

“Barriers would be used to block access routes and reduce the potential for public passage into the training area.” However, frequent visitors familiar with Johnson Valley know there are hundred of trails into the area.

“Additionally, the installation would undertake a public outreach effort to ensure that all potential regional stakeholders would be informed of access restrictions. This effort would involve disseminating informational materials through available means, including the Internet, local community channels, and local recreational organizations similar to those described in Section 2.5.4 (e.g., OHV publication or group website).”

Two criticisms of this statement are:

1. In announcing to the public this long-planned and enormous denial of access to public lands, the Marines only made the outreach efforts that they were required to by law: an announcement in the Federal Register (not daily reading for most), and in the local newspaper of record in 29Palms. We are not aware of other announcements.
2. The BLM announced the segregation of the lands for study.

OHV organizations and Base neighbors spread the word as far as they could to stimulate public comment. Whatever effects this had, there are still those who visit Johnson Valley, and live nearby, who do not know.

The DEIS states extra patrols by Conservation Law Enforcement Officers would occur, permanent signage would be placed on, around, and near the training areas, road crossings, and “likely” access points. Signs would be staggered across the boundary lines at logical intervals to make it difficult for the public to enter the area without encountering a sign. The signs would inform the public that the areas are reserved for exclusive military use. They would also warn of potential dangers and against unauthorized entry.

However, no statement as to the costs to the taxpayer of these measures is shown in the DEIS. To the reader unfamiliar with the area, who does not understand the huge perimeter of the expansion area, even in Alternative 6, who does not understand the porosity of the current borders of the Base, who does not understand the difficulties of creating weatherproof signage for the desert, “logical intervals” sounds logical and do-able. The DEIS must clarify the difficulties and costs of patrolling and signing miles of open desert which will be required to divert visitors who are used to generations of unrestricted access.

The DEIS does not spell out the consequences of inadvertent or deliberate trespass should outreach and border control measures fail. Questions of individual injury and liability must be addressed, and the over-riding question in everyone’s mind: in the case someone trespasses or gets hurt, will the RPAA be closed permanently. The document must be corrected to answer these issues, and must state they were not addressed in the draft version.

Comment ID: 2346 (Page 4 of 4)

Response to Comment 2346 (Page 4 of 4):

As a side note:

The reader scanning the document is likely to come upon this verbiage, and similar foggy language throughout the document, making it almost impossible to understand, where it was possibly meant to simplify:

Table ES-4

Aircraft and Ground-delivered  
Ordnance – presence of  
munitions constituents during  
periods of restricted public  
access results in a LSI to public  
health and safety with identified  
SCMs and other specific RPAA  
management measures. No  
cumulative projects would  
contribute to this impact

Possible translation:

Bombs, rockets and ammo – presence of toxic or hazardous remains of munitions, during periods of access by members of the public who have a permit, results in a less-than-significant impact to public health and safety, given the identified (somewhere?) special cleanup measures, and other restricted public access area management measures including\_\_\_\_\_. Past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions will cause no build up of these hazards.

Still not easy, but at least spelled out. At least someone reading it has a better chance to decide if they agree or disagree on the judgement there will be a less-than-significant impact.

It is unfortunate that fairly technical information has not been not presented in plain English where at all possible; it leaves the preparers of the document facing the criticism that their work is deliberately meant to be hard to understand, turning off public response.

Thank you for your attention,

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2347

**Last Name** MUNSON

**First Name** BETTY

**Comment** COMMENT ATTACHED SEISMIC

**Date Comment Received** 5/26/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2347 (Page 1 of 2)**

From:  
Betty Munson  
4880 Bonanza Rd.  
Johnson Valley CA 92285  
760-364-2646 e-mail: ranchotaj@gmail.com

To:  
Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, CA 92132-5190

May 25, 2011

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion

Dear Sir:

Since the size of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement means it requires a lot of time to study and assimilate; and since there are still stakeholders who are only now hearing of the expansion plans; and since there is confusion as to lack of correct information where to address public comments, calling into question the Marines' good-faith efforts to elicit those comments, **it is requested that the public comment period for the Draft EIS be extended at least another 60 days.**

On Page 570, 574, 578, 582, 583, and 588 under ORDNANCE-RELATED NOISE, and on Page 815 under Sensitive Land Uses, and in other contexts, the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is flawed in its conclusion that noise and vibrations beyond the border only cause "annoyance" and they are "less than significant." Therefore we insist that the study is incomplete with regard to the impact on neighbors of the Base and the proposed expansion areas, if the planned training exercises are carried out.

- The models used in the document evaluate and predict averaged noise projections for the ordnance noise impacts. This is an insurmountable flaw and highly misleading to the non-technical reader. The noise coming from a highway can be averaged because it is a steady level of noise. The noise coming from bombs exploding cannot be averaged, because each explosion is an event. Our ears do not average noise over a 24-hour period. Individual bomb decibel readings at distances as far away as Morongo Valley and Lucerne Valley must be included. As is, the document significantly under-predicts noise impacts and must be corrected.

- The known effects from current training exercises include a significant amount of damage and difficulty to Base neighbors. Everywhere in the document that says or implies the proposed expansion will have no significant impacts from noise to the surrounding communities, please

Page 1 of 2  
Comment

**Response to Comment 2347 (Page 1 of 2):**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in Section 4.4 of the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use and aircraft operations under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public, and may sometimes be an annoyance. In addition to the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) time-averaged analysis conducted in the Draft EIS, single-event noise modeling has been conducted and the results added to Section 4.9 of the Final EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID: 2347 (Page 2 of 2)**

**Response to Comment 2347 (Page 2 of 2):**

replace this with words that say or imply there will be a significantly higher degree of impact and damage and cause greatly increased difficulties to the local residents. Also please state that this fact was incorrectly portrayed in the draft document. Also please correct the under-reported noise levels everywhere in the DEIS, including the CNEL Contour maps and impact tables.

Please state the proposed expansion and increase in training exercises will have a highly significant impact to all residents and visitors to the neighboring areas, which will create a detrimental affect on local schools, agriculture, emergency services and residents.

• Nowhere in the DEIS do we find a definition of "sensitive noise receptors." But all humans and wildlife in the area have at least two, called ears. The humans and wildlife for miles around definitely receive disturbing and startling noise from explosions on the Base. The DEIS states the plan is to increase this; to explode more than a million rounds of munitions ground-to-ground and 1.5 million rounds air-to-ground during the various exercises each year. They project that 22% of that will be detonated from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm and 16% will be detonated from 10:00 pm until 7:00 am.

Humans in the area, their livestock and pets, as well as wildlife above and below ground must therefore sustain an intolerable level of noise, shock and vibration if the training plans proceed as stated.

Any narrative or chart stating that this kind of noise impact outside the borders is "less than significant (LSI)" or a "finding of no significant impact (FONSI)" must be changed to state it is of "significant impact (SI)." On Page 493 Table 4.1.2 showing low projected ordnance noise levels for Baseline and all Alternatives must be corrected to reflect actual individual bomb decibel levels. There also must be a statement that the Draft document omitted this study.

Thank you for your attention,

Betty Munson

**Comment ID** 2348

**Last Name** Ashby

**First Name** Drew

**Comment** To whom it may concern, I, along with Johnson Valley residents and property owners, was invited to join a tour last Tuesday that showcased the unique Johnson Valley Open Riding Area. The purpose was to review the proposed expansion of the Marine Base in preparation for the meeting on Wednesday of the State Parks Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Commission, which had the expansion plans on the agenda. The route chosen showed the visitors some of the best of the Johnson Valley wide and wild variety of terrain. We even got to a trail we had never seen before, through a rocky volcanic pass, just proving every time you go out you find something new. That being said, I am an off-highway vehicle enthusiast and I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area. Thank you for your time, Drew Ashby OC Dualies

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under

alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID**

2349

**Last Name**

Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment**

To Whom It May Concern: I have invested tens of thousands of dollars in off road riding machinery, safety equipment, tow vehicles, living quarters and the like. The only place within 2 hours driving time in my 6 mpg motorhome is Johnson Valley. I am retired and on a fixed income and I vote in every election. I am a personal friend of Congressman Gary Miller and State Senator Bob Huff. I urge you to please consider expanding eastward instead of westward from the existing base. You already have so much land that you are not even using within the confines of the base right now that it makes no sense to displace the homeowners in Johnson Valley that have lived there for decades, not to mention the off roading citizens who have used and maintained Johnson Valley for over half a century. You have other options for expansion (eastward, for example), but we, the off roading public, do not. Any other riding areas are too far away to go there and back for a weekend of riding. This is a multi- million dollar industry that will collapse if this last vestige of riding area within a 2 hour drive is stolen from us. Consider how much money is spent on the following items for off road riding: 1. Motorcycles 2. Quads 3. Helmets 4. Boots 5. Gloves 6. Flak vests 7. Trailers 8. Motorhomes 9. Gasoline 10. Oil 11. Handlebar grips 12. Tires 13. Chains (and sprockets) 14. Air filters 15. Food from local merchants 16. Lawn chairs 17. Various rentals from local businesses (generators, trailers, motorcycles, motorhomes, and so much more) 18. Goggles 19. Riding apparel (pants, shirts, kidney belts, socks, water bottles for the bikes, etc.) 20. Compressors for pumping up tires 21. Items from local hardware stores 22. items from local automotive stores And so many more things that one cannot even count. The off roading community supports the economy. Taking away the right of freedom of recreation in the Johnson Valley desert will further decimate an economy that is already

in serious trouble and may not yet recover in our lifetimes. Also please consider the residents of Johnson Valley who have built homes, dug wells, raised families, and planted trees, some of which are decades old and are just now beginning to provide needed shade and oxygen. In conclusion, please also consider the environmental impact of losing the existing trees and other domestic plants, etc. The wind generally blows from West towards the East. If you expand Eastward, the range of mountains on the existing West Side of the base will act as a windbreak to prevent excessive erosion as troops and ordinance are exercised. Further, if gas warfare training is to be taught, the mountains will act as a barrier to prevent said gases from impacting Big Bear, the surrounding mountain and desert areas, and the Johnson Valley water supply. Johnson Valley is, in fact, the back side of Big Bear. In short, annexing Johnson Valley is a really BAD idea.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2350

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #6: The Marines Corps failed to analyze impacts from noise and vibrations The Draft Environmental Impact Statement is flawed in its conclusion that noise and vibrations beyond the proposed boundaries of the expansion are less than significant. In the documents, the models used only evaluate and predict an average level of noise projections for the ordnance noise impacts. This method will grossly underestimate the noises from bombs and explosions, and the effects on local residents and wildlife. Each and every explosion must be valued as a singular event, and analyzed as such. Decibel readings must be recorded and reported for each event. Individual bomb decibel readings at distances as far away as Morongo Valley and Lucerne Valley must also be included and effects from current training exercises that include a significant amount of impact to local residents be analyzed. The DEIS states the plan is to explode more than a million rounds of munitions ground-to-ground and 1.5 million rounds air-to-ground during the various exercises each year. They project that 22% of that will be detonated from 7:00 pm until 10:00 pm and 16% will be

detonated from 10:00 pm until 7:00 am. This will effect the health and welfare of local residents due to the increased proximity of bombing exercises during the night, which is not reflected in the document. If a supplemental DEIS is not prepared, please correct the Final EIS to state: there will be a significantly higher degree of impact and damage and the proposed expansion will greatly increased difficulties to the local residents. Also please state that this fact was incorrectly portrayed in the draft document, and correct the under-reported noise levels everywhere in the DEIS, including the CNEL Contour maps and impact tables. Please correct the impression in the document that the proposed expansion and increase in training exercises will not have a highly significant impact to all residents and visitors to the neighboring areas. In fact, if analyzed correctly, the proposed expansion will have a highly detrimental effect on all local residents, wildlife and activities, as well as local schools, agriculture, emergency services and residents. This document significantly underestimates all potential impacts and is an incomplete analysis. The study is incomplete with regard to the impact on neighbors of the Base and the proposed expansion areas. Any statement or chart stating that noise impact outside the borders is "less than significant (LSI)" or a "finding of no significant impact (FONSI)" must be changed to state it is of "significant impact (SI)." On Page 493 Table 4.1.2 showing low projected ordnance noise levels for Baseline and all Alternatives must be corrected to reflect actual individual bomb decibel levels.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment. The EIS evaluates noise impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.9). As discussed in the EIS, some noise and vibrations associated with ordnance use under the proposed action may be periodically detected by residents and other members of the public from a distance, and may sometimes be an annoyance. The results of additional single- event noise modeling have been added to Section 4.9 of the EIS to contribute to the evaluation of noise impacts. Noise exposure from existing/current conditions are provided in Chapter 3. Appendix H has four sections: H-1 through H-4. Sections H-1 through H-3 contain a wealth of technical data used in the noise modeling; Section H-4 is the noise primer. Airspace flight operations are assessed using the CNEL<sub>mr</sub> metric consistent with Navy RAICUZ Instructions. This metric accounts for the sporadic nature of airspace activity as well as the “startle” effect caused by low-altitude high-speed flights (see Section 3.9.1). The Maximum Sound Level (L<sub>max</sub>) metric was not specifically designed to measure impulsive sounds and although L<sub>max</sub> provides supplemental noise exposure information, the correct noise metric for assessment of land use compatibility is CNEL (and its derivatives). In addition to the aforementioned high-altitude refueling activity, modeled operations

included low-altitude high-speed flight operations characteristic of existing and proposed flight activity at the Combat Center (see Appendix H).

**Comment ID** 2351

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #7: The Marines Corps failed to included accurate assessment of toxic release The Draft Environmental Impact Statement describes in detail the procedures used to comply with recording and reporting releases of TRI chemicals, and addresses the Marines' methods for dealing with hazardous material spill abatement and cleanups, and contaminated soils, but is incomplete in it's analysis. "Munitions Constituents" (MC) from unexploded ordnance and other munitions, and their breakdown elements, are described and mapped for current and historical ranges. Potential migration into humans and animals is addressed with somewhat limited studies, databases on hazardous wastes from many sources and contaminated sites are described as not revealing any relevant sites. On Page 293, one paragraph describes a total of 50 accidental releases, in 2002, of toxic substances and what was done about them. Deliberate releases and munitions constituents are not itemized. The discussion of toxic wastes ends on Page 301 of the DEIS. Nowhere is the Environmental Protection Agency's Toxic Release Inventory mentioned, with its specific amounts, and the relative standing of military sites in general and MCAGCC in particular. Therefore the DEIS must be amended to show not only the methodology for reporting toxic contaminants but also the kinds and quantities. It must also clearly state estimates for any increases in toxic releases for each Alternative course of action. It must also state this information was missing in the draft document. The document states that use of munitions would be similar to existing use, and therefore potential impacts would be minimal. Since ordnance use is planned to be more intensive and of longer duration, the DEIS must be corrected to reflect that fact and state the draft document was in error. This information should be correctly evaluated in the issuance of a Supplemental DEIS. If a Supplemental DEIS is not released, a statement should be included in the Final EIS that toxic releases and the analyses of increased toxic releases due to increased munitions usage was not adequately analyzed and the potential effect to local communities, residents and wildlife remain unknown.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Munitions constituents and toxic chemical release reporting requirements are described in Section 3.4 and 4.4 of the

EIS. As described in the EIS the Combat Center complies with the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (EPCRA) Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) program, and all other federal, state, and local requirements regarding hazardous materials and wastes, and would continue to do so under the proposed action. The Marine Corps is committed to protection of the public and the environment. Therefore, use of spill kits and drip pans is a Standard Operating Procedure. Section 4.4.2.3 of the EIS discusses the management of hazardous materials and wastes under the proposed action. Under any land acquisition scenario, current procedures for spill prevention, containment, cleanup, and management of hazardous wastes (including motor oil, gear fluid, etc.) would be implemented as outlined in Combat Center Order 5090.1D and environmental Standard Operating Procedures.

**Comment ID** 2352

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The state of California, and specifically southern California residents suffer an unjust burden in regards to land used militarily for the protection of our nation. Already the military has 3665.25 mi<sup>2</sup> of southern California land used in the specific type of training that the additional lands are being sought to fulfill, the EIS does not provide adequate non-partisan studies on the combined use of these facilities to satisfy the mandated need of training. Therefore the only alternative Justifiable is no action.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2353

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment**

Comment #8: The Marines Corps failed to analyze the effects of the proposed expansion as it refers to Environmental Justice. Environmental Justice concerns the effects on certain ethnic, demographic or socio-economic groups from proposed federal projects. These groups should not bear disproportionate impacts from these project, as this places an unfair burden on these segments of society. The DEIS has failed to analyze the proposed expansion and the effects as referred to Environmental Justice, because it only analyzes the effects on residents living in the actual area of the proposed expansion. It is clear to everyone who visits the Johnson Valley OHV Area that residents do not live within the proposed expansion area, it is an open area dedicated to OHV recreation. However there are many residents living on the proposed border of the expansion, and in surrounding communities. To excluded the analysis of these communities as it pertains to Environmental Justice is disingenuous, and a disservice to these communities. It is clear that the area criteria used in the DEIS is far too narrow, and all the economic and other hardships as they pertain to Environmental Justice need to be reevaluated and the correct area of impact evaluated. The populations outside the immediate DEIS area have not been considered at all, which is incorrect, since the proposed activities due to the expansion are not known. The DEIS is highly misleading in this context. Likewise, Landers and Johnson Valley and their airspace are already significantly impacted by noise, vibration, air pollution and/or light pollution. The proposed expansion of training exercises and Combat Center area will cause very significant impacts to a population too old, and with too low an income to even consider moving away to other locations, where the cost of living will be greatly increased. A supplemental DEIS must be released to accurately portray the effects of the proposed expansion on local communities, as they pertain to Environmental Justice. If a Supplemental DEIS is not released, the Final EIS must contain a statement that notes that the analysis as it pertains to Environmental Justice is incomplete, and the effects of the proposed expansion unknown.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response**

As outlined in Section 4.3.1.2 of the EIS, three criteria are used to assess the significance of impacts to minority and low-income communities in the context of environmental justice (EO 12898, Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations): 1) there must be one or more such populations within the project area; 2) there must be adverse (or significant) impacts from the action; and 3) the environmental justice populations within the project area must bear a disproportionate burden of these adverse impacts. If any of these criteria are not met, then impacts with respect to environmental justice would not be significant. As discussed in the Section 4.3, there are no specific concentrations of minority or low-income populations in the vicinity of the proposed action as defined by the action alternatives. All socioeconomic

and environmental impacts that are attributable to the proposed action would apply equally to any affected persons, regardless of minority or income status; therefore no impacts would occur with respect to environmental justice.

**Comment ID** 2354

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** The EIS does not adequately study the environmental consequences of reduced Land space for the outdoor recreation needed by the 25,000,000 people living Within a 250 mile radius, of this easily accessible OHV area. Therefore the environmental impact could be substantial although difficult to accurately estimate. No action must be the accepted course of action,

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2355

**Last Name** anderson

**First Name** ken

**Comment** Being a Vietnam vet i can appreciate the need for training, but not in Johnson Valley. Go East or somewhere else. This expansion takes one of the last large OHV area's left in Ca. and will destroy the economy of Lucerne Valley and other communities in the area. It will affect air quality, noise pollution, mining and recreation. Please don't take our land away; Thank you, Ken Anderson

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy

during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2356

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #9: The Marines Corps failed to analyze seismic hazards The document discusses existing seismic conditions on the existitng boundaries of the 29Palms Marine base. On Page 449 the DEIS states that the Mojave Desert is highly active seismically, and reports that 50 named and unnamed faults can be found within the current boundaries. It specifies, "in 1999, the magnitude 7.1 Hector Mine earthquake on the Lavic Lake Fault was centered in the northwest portion of the Combat Center. This earthquake caused a 24-mile long surface rupture with a maximum offset of 12 to 15 feet." There is a map showing major fault lines in the west study area. It depicts a thick cluster of parallel faults which include the Camp Rock-Emerson Fault, trending northeast to southwest across the entire western Johnson Valley area through which there are plans to conduct live-fire air-ground training exercises of high intensity and extended duration. But the only comment as to the effects of the proposed expansion and affiliated training exercises are found on page 771 in the DEIS. It states; "The effects of ordnance delivery would be limited to surficial and near- surface soils so the proposed action would not be expected to have an impact on topography or seismic conditions or hazards within the ROI or in the Twentynine Palms region." Although it is possible that the reference to "seismic conditions" in this paragraph concerns the potential of triggering earthquake activity, but this is doubtful. Since this is the only instance in the entire DEIS that concerns seismic activity, and the potential of increased seismic activity, the Marines have omitted a critical component of the necessary analysis of the DEIS. It is clear that the Landers earthquake of 1992 has been forgotten, the evidence that was produced that training exercises were occurring on the base at the very moment of the earthquake. Currently, ordnance used on the bases causes earthquake-like tremors, as well as considerable vibration. This DEIS is incomplete because it has omitted this significant analysis of the proposed expansion, and training exercises in an area full of known seismic faults. Ignoring this issue is a fatal flaw in the document, and a Supplemental DEIS must be produced to correct this error. There is no connection shown between large explosions and seismic activity, nor is there any analysis of potential hazards from increased vibrations to local structures. If a Supplemental DEIS is not produced, please reflect in the Final EIS that seismic issues and hazards

were omitted from the analysis, and it is unknown how the proposed expansion will effect seismic activity in the expansion area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Additional text has been added to Section 3.13 and 4.12, Geological Resources with respect to seismic conditions and hazards.

**Comment ID** 2357

**Last Name** anderson

**First Name** Nancy

**Comment** Please don't take our play ground away from us, Johnson Valley. We and our family have been enjoying it for over 25 years. Go to the East. Nancy Anderson

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2358

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I disagree with you taking over the desert in the form your looking at. Maybe a much less area, there are desert tortoises in this area (I have photos to prove this)that will parish, they dig long tunnels that any heavy tanks etc. would crush! and kill off most of there food source on top. These are an endangered species and protected. On the California Nevada state line is a solar power plant being built on 5 square miles with only about 10% grading done that had to stop (mid way through) because of these tortoises. Any part time use wouldn't work because any ammunicions not discharged may accidentally be discharge by a civilian on free time, being harmed or killed. The question is what's the % of usage of time of the land you have

now and can you use it more wisely(how many days of the year are actually used?? )

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process. The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The EIS has been revised accordingly.

As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range sweep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2359

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I would like to speak out firmly against the "preferred" Alternative #6. Any proposal that results in the permanent loss of any part of Johnson Valley would be absolutely devastating to the off-road community. Johnson Valley is a truly unique OHV area, not just because of its size and variety of terrain, but also its relative proximity to the enormous population centers of Los Angeles, San Diego, and Las Vegas. As such, it is priceless and irreplaceable. But, beyond the numbers of acres and dollars lost, I feel like the human factors have been grossly undervalued in this whole process. To the Marines, it just a matter of requirements, mandates, logistics, convenience, and money. The Marine driving a tank during training will not

care whether he is in Johnson Valley or the Eastern Study Area. For off-roaders, Johnson Valley is special. For so many of us, it is our sacred place - some families have been riding there for generations. We have lived there, loved there, and even, sadly, lost loved ones there. It is not just a pile of rocks or a set of GPS coordinates. It is also a set of memories and a heritage for millions of people. If we lose Johnson Valley, I fear it will not be long before we will have to add "off-roader" next to the Desert Tortoise on the list of endangered species. I urge the Marine Corps to reconsider their requirements, or, if Alternative #3 is unpalatable, at least put forth a viable alternative that does not involve the annexation of any part of Johnson Valley.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2360

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** As an avid recreational rock crawler, the thought of losing Johnson Valley is honestly depressing. It is my favorite area to wheel, and its cherished by many other in the state and country as well. Sure, there are plenty of places I can go wheeling, but the difference is that I can take weekend trips to JV. I do just that at least a handful of times a year even with a busy schedule. Its even a yearly ritual of mine for Thanksgiving... Now, I am a big supporter of our armed forces and feel that our troops need realistic training environments. I am extremely thankful for everything that the armed forces do for me and the country. I understand that 29 palms needs to expand, but I strongly request that it does not expand west into any part of Johnson Valley! Alternative 6, the one preferred by the Marines, is not acceptable in my opinion. Even if there was adequate information detailing the specifics of the shared use procedure, in my eyes it would still be a terrible loss to the public. Instead, I hope that the Marines will expand east, into areas they have used previously for training exercises. Alternative 2 is the only plan that I personally support. This will allow both the public to maintain year round access to JV and the Marines to train their men and women. Also, the reality is that most wheelers are supporters of the armed forces. Taking

away these public lands is hurting your supporters! I have some very fond memories of Johnson Valley, particularly the Hammers trails. Being out on Aftershock in the late afternoon, cresting the last waterfall, and racing back to camp is a picturesque day for me... Another good time was when I was hopelessly stuck on Lower Big Johnson, requiring winches and Hi Lift jacks, all while sporting a huge smile! I hope that someday I can bring my kids out to Johnson Valley, teaching them about the desert and allowing them to enjoy the public lands that I enjoy now. I really hope that the Marines will leave JV intact. The offroad community has lost a lot of our legal wheeling areas in recent years. This additional loss would have an extremely negative impact on our sport and the people who depend on it for their livelihood. California, and particularly the southern half of the state, is a hotbed for manufactures of aftermarket enhancements. Most of the modifications to my Jeep were purchased from companies based in our state. Thank you for serving. Please go east...

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2361

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #10: The Marines Corps failed to accurately analyze the effects of the proposed expansion on the Desert Tortoise The desert tortoise is listed as a threatened species by the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and anyone who engages in activities that will harm a tortoise is subject to penalties and is considered a criminal act. The DEIS is silent as to the current status of tortoise fatalities on the existing base. Without that information, there is no accurate method to extrapolate what the potential hazard there might be to the desert tortoise population in the expansion area. In the table 4.10-2. "Estimated Take of Desert Tortoises from Military Training under the Six Action Alternatives" , it shows that preferred Alternative 6, tortoise take will range between a low of 154 to a high of 714, estimated over a 50-year project lifetime. There is no explanation to what the '154 to 714' is referencing, leaving the reader to wonder if this a

yearly figure, or a average per year, or a total number for 50 years. Since the current mortality rate is not correctly offered, the numbers were arrived at through conjecture and hypothesis. That is not an adequate analysis for this threatened species. As a basis for judgment on the military threat to an endangered species, this confusion and uncertainty are not acceptable. The DEIS is silent regarding the trauma tortoises will experience underground due to the noise, vibration or seismic waves created by use of possible deep penetration, bombing and gunfire during the combat training exercises. The trauma may prevent the tortoise from mating or nesting and have a further deleterious impact on their dwindling population. This is what the analysis in the DEIS is supposed to uncover, but it has fallen sadly short of the mark. Page 711 contains the following a statement indicating that closure of a portion of Johnson Valley due to the proposed expansion would benefit the desert tortoise. It is implied that the impact on wildlife, including the Desert Tortoise, of any motorcycle, quad, four-wheel-drive truck or buggy is comparable to the impact of a 68-ton Abrams tank, which can travel easily over desert terrain at a top speed of 40 mph. Even the impact of great numbers of OHV's over many years has not and will not compare to heavy military vehicles in Marine Expeditionary Brigade-sized numbers engaged in live-fire air-ground combat maneuvers for 24 days twice a year, as well as other smaller training activities the rest of the year. This implication is misleading, and must be deleted. Any comparison in the EIS between OHV activities and combat training must be very clear as to the impacts not only of the heavy armored vehicles and trucks, but the literal impacts of bombs and cannon fire to the tortoise. The DEIS must clarify the methodology, and use credible, current studies to support the analysis. The Marines would be wise to issue a Supplemental DEIS with a correct analysis.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response**

The EIS evaluates impacts to biological resources under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.10). The Marine Corps is currently undergoing consultation with the USFWS service in regards to impacts to the desert tortoise and other wildlife species. The EIS has been revised accordingly. Analysis of noise impacts to wildlife in the Draft EIS were based on the best available information. Noise modeling conducted for the proposed project was focused on impacts to humans. The noise contours developed through the noise modeling effort were considered in the analysis of impacts to biological resources, and the noise metrics from those contours were considered important even though they are weighted toward frequencies important to humans. However, because peak sound levels (and the frequency of occurrence of those sound levels) are of greater concern in analysis of impacts to wildlife than the averaged metrics used in analysis of noise impacts to humans, the biological resources analysis focused more on the locations of ordnance explosion (represented by WDZs and SDZs) and paths of task force travel. Discussion is included throughout the EIS noting

the proximity of known populations to these WDZs, SDZs, and task force routes. In addition to this discussion throughout the text, potential noise effects are discussed for the desert tortoise and other wildlife species (see Section 4.10). While the relative importance of various factors in the decline of the desert tortoise are still uncertain and the EIS states this, the published literature that is available indicates that OHVs do adversely affect tortoises via habitat degradation and direct impacts (one such review is Ouren et al. 2007). Analysis of existing disturbance in the west study area from OHVs indicated a significant correlation between areas of high OHV disturbance and lower desert tortoise densities (refer to Appendix I of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2362

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** In regards to the military taking over areas that the public are currently using for recreational hobbies. I have to say I find it very misleading to say the public and the military can cohabitate. It seems that when the military wants to use the land not only will it devastate the land it may leave behind items that civilians should not have contact with. I am new to the off road community and I look forward to taking my grandchildren. I am very nervous as to what they may find, not to mention having to explain to them why there are dead wild life not caused by natural means. There is no way the military can prevent the killing of wild life that exist in the Johnson Valley area and surrounding areas. On two different times in May when we went out for the day we had the pleasure of seeing Desert Tortoises, Horney Toads, Gila Monsters, snakes and many birds. We even experienced the mating season of the Tarantula Hawks. The flowers and cactus that are there are just beautiful and again I cant see a tank or any type of military vehicle traipsing across this land without devastation. I am very proud of our military and I appreciate the efforts they make to ensure the proper training they need. There has to be a better solution to the use of this land. I hope every concern is listened to and considered when making this decision that could change this area forever.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As outlined in Section 3.4, Combat Center Order 3500.4h SOP for Range/Training Area and Airspace provides guidance for training range operations, which includes routine range sweeps to remove safety hazards and range clearance operations following every exercise. The Marine Corps would continue these same procedures on any

acquired land area. In addition, the Marine Corps proposed several measures (such as use of non dud-producing ordnance, range weep, and range clearance) that would be implemented under Alternatives 4, 5 or 6 that would allow the Restricted Public Access Area to be available for public use (refer to Section 2.5.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2363

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please note I am a big supporter of the military especially the Navy and Marines but please consider my opinion regarding this matter .I feel that any westward expansion would negatively impact the Johnson Valley OHV area as well as the local economy as many small buisneses rely upon the income brought in by the recreational use of Johnson valley. In addition, the local economy shows their largest profits on weekends that have off-road races in the Johnson Valley OHV area. Races such as the MORE 500 and King of the Hammers bring thousands of competitors, spectaters and vendors to this area. We ask that the Marines expand the base to the East per option 3.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2364                                                                                                |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Hewit                                                                                               |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Steve                                                                                               |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please see the attached file. If you have troubles please contact me as soon as possible. Thank you |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/27/2011                                                                                           |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.              |

Comment ID: 2364 (Page 1 of 2)

Steve Hewitt  
26015 Fiesta Place  
Hemet, California 92544

May 26, 2011

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: 29 Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Statement Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment 29 Palms Base

Dear Sir:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). I have several concerns with Mitigation in the DEIS. I consider myself a stakeholder since myself and my families are frequent visitors to Johnson Valley Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) Area and enjoy camping, riding, and hiking in this important resource. I am submitting this letter as an individual.

The DEIS fails to adequately examine the necessary mitigation measures for the proposed alternatives.

- **In Chapter 4 Section 4.2.2.4 Potential Mitigation Measures** the DEIS states “No mitigation measures are recommended. Consequently, Alternative 1 would result in significant, unmitigable impacts.”
- **In Chapter 4 Section 4.2.3.4 Potential Mitigation Measures** the DEIS states “No mitigation measures are recommended. Consequently, Alternative 2 would result in significant, unmitigable impacts.”
- **In Chapter 4 Section 4.2.5.4 Potential Mitigation Measures** the DEIS states “Therefore, significant, unmitigable impacts to recreational resources would occur with implementation of Alternative 4, albeit much less than those described under Alternative 1.
- **In Chapter 4 Section 4.2.6.4 Potential Mitigation Measures** the DEIS states “Therefore, significant, unmitigable impacts to recreational resources would occur with implementation of Alternative 5, albeit much less than those described under Alternative 1.
- **In Chapter 4 Section 4.2.7.4 Potential Mitigation Measures** the DEIS states “Therefore, significant, unmitigable impacts to recreational resources would occur with implementation of Alternative 6, albeit much less than those described under Alternative 1.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 40 C.F.R Section 1508.20 (e) states “Compensating for the impact by replacing or providing substitute resources or environments” The Johnson Valley OHV Area is a vital resource for outdoor recreation.

The DEIS must be changed to include mitigated OHV recreation land in Alternatives, 1,2,4,5, and 6. This must be new open OHV lands, not land that is already open to OHV use, IE: Spangler Hills, El Mirage, etc. If the agency can't afford the replacement land than the only alternative is the No Action Alternative or Alternative 3.

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Response to Comment 2364 (Page 1 of 2):

Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps does not have the authority to designate recreation lands as mitigation for the proposed action. The EIS determined that impacts to Recreation (under all action alternatives) would be significant and that no mitigation measures would fully reduce the impacts to below a level of significance.

Comment ID: 2364 (Page 2 of 2)

Response to Comment 2364 (Page 2 of 2):

Thank you for your time and consideration. If you have any question or need assistance I will be happy to help.

Sincerely,

*Steve Hewitt*

Steve Hewitt  
[h.hewittsix@verizon.net](mailto:h.hewittsix@verizon.net)  
951-237-0233

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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**Comment ID** 2365

**Last Name** Cunningham

**First Name** Philip

**Comment** I favor Option 2, for the military to select option #2 with the land areas East of Johnson Valley to be used for military Training. I am disabled and this is one of the very few outdoor sports/recreational activities that I can participate in, since I cannot walk or do many other things. It enables me to see the nature and the outdoors from a vehicle seat. Thank you, Phil Cunningham

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2366

**Last Name** Paulsen

**First Name** Eric

**Comment** To whom it may concern, This letter is in regards to the DEIS that was recently released for the acquisition and annexation of Johnson Valley OHV area into the existing Twentynine Palms Marine Air Ground Combat Center. I strongly object to the Department of the Navy's move to acquire any or all of the existing Johnson Valley OHV area. My family frequently recreates at Johnson Valley OHV area, usually six to ten times a year and Alternative 6 that was identified in the DEIS will severely impact those opportunities. I strongly encourage that Department of the Navy look to the east of the Twentynine Palms MACGC facility for any future expansion, or at a minimum, give further consideration to Alternatives 4 or 5 as described in the DEIS as a shared use alternative. PLEASE DO NOT MOVE FORWARD WITH ALTERATIVE 6. This will severely impact my family's OHV recreational opportunities. Sincerely, Eric Paulsen AMA D-37 CORVA

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2367

**Last Name** Granat

**First Name** Amy

**Comment** Comment #11: The Marines Corps used incorrect criteria to eliminate Alternative 3. The screening criteria for evaluating the alternatives was devised by the project's Executive Steering Committee, composed of Marine Corps leadership. But the screening criteria is not law, and as seen in the rest of the document, the screening criteria are applied at random, when convenient to an analysis. It is noted in the document that Alternative 3 does not comply with Screening Criteria number 5, which states; "Avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, cities/towns, and interstate highways." This is the only reason that is given in the DEIS for excluding Alternative 3 for serious review as the preferred alternative. Yet Alternative 6 also violates screening criteria number 5 in that the preferred alternative will go into habitat that is known to contain threatened species, yet little emphasis has been placed on that violation. All alternatives, except Alternative 3 and the unnumbered No Action Alternative, indeed violate screening criteria number 5 to a much larger degree. The choice of Alternative 6 as the preferred alternative also violates screening criteria number 5 in that it would entail the closest proximity to cities and towns, have the highest impact to cities and towns, and cause the greatest financial impact to cities and towns. In reviewing all the screening criteria, it appears that Alternative 3 has the highest compliance with all the screening criteria. If this is indeed the methodology that has been used to determine the appropriateness of a preferred alternative, Alternative 3 should have been chosen. By not applying screening criteria in a consistent manner, the public has been misled. A Supplemental DEIS must be produced that applies the screening criteria in a fair analysis over all the alternatives. It is clear in the document that Alternative 3 was eliminated in a haphazard manner, inconsistent with good analysis.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. The objective and threshold training requirements and generic MEB Exercise training template described in Section 2.2, MEB Training Requirements and Representative MEB Exercise Template, directly influenced the development and application of the screening criteria described in the EIS. Some of the screening criteria are exclusionary in nature, representing conditions that must be true for an alternative to be considered reasonable. Only alternatives (with the exception of the No-Action Alternative, see Section 2.4.7) that would satisfy the criteria described in the EIS were considered reasonable and carried forward for detailed evaluation. Section 2.4.3 of the EIS describes Alternative 3, which would involve acquisition of land east of the current Combat Center without needing to de-designate wilderness area, and this alternative was carried forward for analysis in the EIS. Section 2.4.8 described the Marine Corps rationale for selecting Alternative 6 as the preferred alternative. However, as described in the EIS, all six action alternatives (including Alternative 3) meet the minimum selection criteria for an alternative to be considered feasible, and as such, all action alternatives have been equally carried forward for detailed analysis. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID** 2368

**Last Name** Massuco

**First Name** Robert

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS

in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2369

**Last Name** Queen

**First Name** Dehnert

**Comment** See attached pdf comment file

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.

**Comment ID: 2369 (Page 1 of 12)**

VIA CERTIFIED MAIL # 7010 0780 0000 4254 3249

May 26, 2011

MAGTF/C, MCAGCC  
Building 1554  
Box 788104  
Twentynine Palms, CA 92278-8104

Re: Public Comment – Twentynine Palms Expansion DEIS

Ladies and Gentlemen:

This document constitutes both comments regarding subject DEIS and a solution that is consistent with National Defense Doctrine for the Real Parties of Interest. The People of the United States and the men and women of the American Defense Forces.

On January 31, 2009, I timely delivered my public comments by e-mail to Mr. Joseph Ross, Land Acquisition Manager at MAGTF/C, MCAGCC and upon request I received an e-mail acknowledging its timely receipt. In important part, my comments included a proposed ALTERNATIVE that included a TOPO map to establish a "379,585 acre Training Site" centrally located on the Gulf Coast, specifically on the boundary lines between Kansas and Oklahoma such that the U.S. Marines could "ramp up for a specific mission – to the West, East, North, and South – anywhere in the world – in the LEAST AMOUNT OF ASSEMBLY AND TRAVEL TIME."

I then called the contact number provided in the DEIS Notice and left a message to return my call such that I could acquire the official response to my public comments. No response. I then tried numerous times to make contact with personnel at MCAGCC but no response was forthcoming.

Perhaps part of the reasons for no response is that my 2009 public comment document stated that *"It is apparent that the 'process' thus far has been POLITICALLY driven, rather than driven by the best civilian and military minds available,"* and *"Simply stated the Center for Naval Analysis' . . . data would be inadequate to undertake even a startup of a LEMONADE STAND ON A NEIGHBORHOOD CORNER."*

Nevertheless, I continued my research and analysis regarding what is really needed by the U.S. Marines as to the scope and location of an adequate Training Range.

**Here I would point out that America's 350 million residents live on only three percent of the total land mass of the United States.**

**Why are we quibbling about a million or two acres?**

**How is it that subject DEIS contains thousands of pages of environmental rhetoric, but does NOT address the key issue: American sovereignty?**

**Response to Comment 2369 (Page 1 of 12):**

Thank you for your comment. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered several alternative scenarios for the proposed action (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF) Training at other military bases in the U.S.) but eliminated them from detailed study. Although the Army and the Marine Corps often serve side-by-side and sometimes execute similar missions, they have very different training requirements. The MAGTF is the Marine Corps' principal organization for conducting missions across the range of military operations. MAGTFs employ and integrate air- and ground-based operations. The Marine Corps is legally required to provide forces of combined arms, which is a unique Marine Corps mission and capability. MAGTF training involves a fully integrated live fire environment. MAGTF training employs a progressive approach, starting with combined arms integration techniques and procedures at the company level and culminating in a final exercise involving all elements of the Exercise Force MAGTF, such as the MEB-sized training proposed for the Combat Center. Fort Irwin does not have ranges capable of supporting MEB-sized sustained, combined-arms live-fire and maneuver training and the modification of Fort Irwin to better accommodate Marine Corps training requirements would preclude the Army's ability to meet its own training requirements and be optimally prepared for deployment. See Section 2.7 of the EIS for more information about alternatives that were considered but not carried forward for analysis in the EIS.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

Comment ID: 2369 (Page 2 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 2 of 12):

**Thus, how is it possible that the Twentynine Palms base is one of only two such bases in the United States – and the second base in Florida is being closed or has been closed down?**

**And protecting the Twentynine Palms Military Base “must be achieved,” yet the following issues have NOT been addressed?**

All of the “Base Expansion” programs via Congressional Legislation and related Appropriation Bills are one like the other, just the title of the Military Base changes, except that the Appropriation Bills DICTATE the outcome because of micromanagement of the process to conform with Environmental Law, paid for via the Defense Budget.

My position is that the process for Fort Erwin / National / Training Center has been underway since 2001 and it is NOT CLEAR WHETHER THE EXPANSION WAS COMPLETED AND DECLARED OPERATIONAL. OR AFTER 10 YEARS, IS IT STILL “A WORK IN PROGRESS”?

SIMPLY STATED, THE 1.22 MILLION ACRES OF THE FORT ERWIN FACILITY SHOULD BE ABLE TO PROVIDE FOR ALL THAT IS PLANNED FOR THE TWENTYNINE PALMS BASE, BUT THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE.

THUS THE TWENTYNINE PALMS BASE DEIS PROCESS MUST BE SUSPENDED UNTIL THE STATUS OF ALL THE “BASE EXPANSIONS” THAT CONSTITUTE ABOUT 1/6<sup>TH</sup> OF THE LAND MASS IN THE REGION HAVE NOT BEEN COMPILED INTO A SINGLE DEIS DOCUMENT SUCH THAT THE ATRIBUTUTES AND STATUS OF EACH FACILITY ARE DISCLOSED.

IT IS MY POSITION THAT THIS MUST BE TIMELY PERFORMEND IN A “SUPPLIMENTAL DEIS/ DEIR.”

Key points and issues follow, NONE OF WHICH WERE ADDRESSED IN ANY OF SUBJECT EIR’S FOR MILITARY BASES:

FORT IRWIN EXPANSION, KEY ELEMENTS DOCUMENT

Dated  
January 12, 2001

KEY ELEMENTS  
OF  
PROPOSED EXPANSION PLAN  
FOR

FORT IRWIN AND THE NATIONAL TRAINING CENTER

**Executive Summary.**

Congress DIRECTED the Department of the Army and Department of Interior to draft a proposed plan that would expand the maneuver training lands at the National Training Center while protecting endangered and threatened species and their critical habitats; Public Law 106-554, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001,” incorporates by reference H.R. 5666, “Miscellaneous

Comment ID: 2369 (Page 3 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 3 of 12):

Appropriations.” Section 323 of which requires that the Secretaries jointly provide to Congress the key elements of the proposed expansion plan no later than 45 days after enactment. Within 90 days after enactment, the Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service is to provide the Secretaries with a preliminary review of the plan that identifies an approach for implementing the plan consistent with the Endangered Species Act. Within 120 days of enactment, the Secretaries are required to submit a proposed expansion plan and to propose legislation for the withdrawal and reservation of public lands for the National Training Center expansion.

All activities are to be taken in full compliance with the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act, and other applicable laws and regulations.

Introduction.

The National Training Center (NTC) at Fort Irwin, California, is the only instrumented training area in the world suitable for force-on-force and live fire training of heavy brigade-sized military forces. It provides the Army with essential training opportunities necessary to maintain and improve military readiness and promote national security. The NTC must be expanded to meet the critical need of the Army for additional training lands suitable for the maneuver of large numbers of military personnel and equipment, which is necessitated by advances in equipment, by doctrinal changes, and by Army Transformation requirements.

The lands being considered for expansion of the NTC are home to the desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) and Lane Mountain milkvetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*), which are protected under the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), 16 U.S.C. §§1531 et seq. Any plan for the expansion of the NTC must provide for such expansion in a manner that complies with the ESA, the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), 42 U.S.C. §§4321 et seq., and other applicable laws.

By legislation, Public Law 106-554, “Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2001,” incorporating by reference H.R. 5666, “Miscellaneous Appropriations,” Section 323, entitled “Fort Irwin National Training Center Expansion” (Attachment 1), Congress directed the Secretaries of the Interior and Army to:

Within 45 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress a joint report on key elements of a proposed plan to expand the NTC and to provide for conservation measures;

Within 90 days of enactment, obtain the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (FWS) preliminary review of the proposed expansion plan for the purpose of identifying an approach for implementing the plan consistent with the ESA;

Within 120 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress a proposed expansion plan that takes into account the content of the FWS's preliminary review; and

Within 120 days of enactment, prepare and submit to Congress proposed legislation providing for withdrawal and reservation of public lands for the expansion of the NTC;

Initiate as soon as practicable, and complete within 24 months of enactment, consultation required under Section 7 of the ESA;

IS IT NOT ALL BUT IMPOSSIBLE TO PERFORM  
THE ABOVE STEPS IN A THROUGH MANNER  
IN A MATTER OF A FEW DAYS, NOT MONTHS ANDYEARS?

Within 30 months of enactment, complete any analysis required under NEPA.

**Comment ID: 2369 (Page 4 of 12)**

**Response to Comment 2369 (Page 4 of 12):**

THE FOLLOWING RHETORIC IS THE SAME FOR SUBJECT DEIR..

III. Fort Irwin and the National Training Center.

A. Establishment, Purpose, and Mission.

In 1940, President Roosevelt established the Mojave Anti-Aircraft Range, a military reservation of 1,000 square miles, in the area of present-day Fort Irwin. In 1942, the post was re-named Camp Irwin in honor of Major General G. Leroy Irwin, World War I commander of the 57th Field Artillery Brigade. The post was deactivated in 1944. It was reactivated in 1951 as a training center for combat units in the Korean War.

The post was designated a permanent Class 1 installation in August 1961 and was designated Fort Irwin. During the Viet Nam buildup, many units, primarily artillery and engineer, were trained and deployed to Southeast Asia directly from the post.

In January 1971, the post was again deactivated and placed in maintenance status under the control of Fort McArthur, California. Despite deactivation, the post continued to serve as a training site for the National Guard and Army Reserve.

On October 16, 1980, Fort Irwin was selected from several candidates to become the site of the new National Training Center. On July 1, 1981 Fort Irwin was reactivated as an active Army installation.

The mission of the NTC since its inception has been to provide tough, realistic combined arms and joint training to be conducted under conditions that must remain relevant to the combat situations our forces must face.

Advances in weaponry, demands in logistics and command/control, and developments in information technology emphasize the need to train brigades across the full spectrum of operations.

Such training carries the added benefit of allowing brigades to be trained with their full complement of combat and support units during each NTC rotational training exercise.

These larger training operations enhance the development of doctrine and technology for the future.

The NTC is limited by its current available acreage to provide a realistic training environment to meet the expanding needs of Army brigades.

B. Need for Expansion.

The expansion of the NTC at Fort Irwin is essential to maintaining operational readiness for National Security.

It is the only instrumented training area in the world suited for force-on-force and live fire training of heavy brigade-sized and battalion task forces. Advances in equipment (e.g., longer engagement ranges of weapon systems), doctrinal changes (expansion of the battle space by at least a factor of four), and the ongoing Army Transformation require the expansion.

Because of advances in weapon systems, brigades and battalions are required to cover more ground; they operate in dispersed areas of operation; mass to conduct decisive combat operations; and then disperse again.

Comment ID: 2369 (Page 5 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 5 of 12):

*It is my position that subject "New Doctrine" is FATALLY FLAWED because the New Doctrine may be able to TAKE ground during BATTLE, but would be UNABLE to KEEP the ground upon ATTACK by a subsequent MASSED offensive by the enemy because of the LACK of an ADEQUATE level of US Soldiers deployed in the "Field of Battle," thus incurring US Soldier casualties for which there can be NO possible justification*

*And THIS New Doctrine was propounded by President Bush Sr. during the 1990-1991 "Persian Gulf War" that Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney and Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen Colin Powell's "Desert Shield" doctrine CREATED as the only option available to overcome the Democrats' 1970's "Vietnam Peace Benefit" that was FUNDED by CUTTING IN HALF military personnel, Defense Dept R & D, etc., and thus the military budget . . . totaling Billions of Dollars . . . that Congressional Democrats' spent wildly and freely . . . and are STILL doing so today as shown by subject "Twentynine Palms Expansion" which DUPLICATES BOTH THE INTENT AND THE CONTENT IMPOSED BY THE ABOVE 2001 "FORT IRWIN EXPANSION" DOCUMENT.*

Key Points and Issues  
That are NOT Addressed in Subject DEIR

Units are [now] required to cover and operate over more ground than ever before -- 50km x 100km, as opposed to the 26km x 58km-maneuver space currently available.

These factors drive the Army's requirement for additional maneuverable training land at the NTC to accommodate brigade-sized and battalion task force training operations.

When Fort Irwin was designated the NTC in 1980, tactics were structured around equipment that could effectively engage an enemy at ranges of 1 to 12 miles.

Today, the Army effectively engages the enemy at ranges up to 60 miles away.





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Response to Comment 2369 (Page 8 of 12):

| Category       | Description                                           | Value 1 | Value 2 | Total     |
|----------------|-------------------------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Enviro Areas   | Total Enviro Areas under this Bill                    | 316.90  | 22.16   | 202,816   |
| Military Areas | Total Fort Irwin Military Expansion                   | 206.80  | 18.48   | 132,350   |
| Sum Acreages   | Military and Enviro Areas created by this bill        | 523.70  | 40.66   | 335,166   |
| Finding        | Enviro Acres Exceeds Base Expansion BY                | 110.10  | (3.67)  | 70,465.56 |
| Recan          | Minimum withdrawal from BLM, per ABOVE                | 521.24  | 22.83   | 333,592   |
| Finding        | Variance between Legislative Bill outcome of Acreages | 2.46    | 1.57    | 1,573     |

C. History and Alternatives.

In the mid-1980s, the need for additional land for training at the NTC was identified because of changes in doctrine, equipment, and tactics. This need was subsequently validated and quantified by two Land Use Requirements Studies (LURS).

[“Studies” performed by WHO? - “The Center for Naval Analysis, Alexandria, VA” [aka] “The Center for Naval Analysis” that performed the “study” to expand the “Twentynine Palms Marine Base”? Equals “Junk Science !!!”

The studies indicated a shortfall of about 193,000 net maneuverable acres on the NTC to adequately meet training needs. Various alternatives were developed and studied to enable the NTC to meet the needs identified in the LURS. These alternatives included variations of land configurations adjacent to the NTC, as well as use of other military installations. Each of the studied alternatives presented disadvantages as to impacts on the environment, training value of the land, cost, and co-use complications.

The Army has identified a proposed expansion plan that incorporates the advantages of both an eastern and western expansion.

This alternative involves acquisition of approximately 110,000 new acres on the east and southwest sides of the existing NTC and the return to training use of about 22,000 acres in the south that are currently set aside [for WHAT?] on the NTC. While this total is less than the 193,000 acres identified in the LURS, it satisfies the most critical needs [WHAT?] for additional maneuver lands, while taking into account the Army’s environmental stewardship responsibilities.

IV. West Mojave Desert.

A. Endangered and Threatened Species

Twelve federally listed threatened and endangered species are found within the West Mojave Desert. These include endemic plants with a very limited range to wide ranging species that are endangered by disease and human-related actions. An additional 106 unlisted species have been identified as target species for protection by the West Mojave Desert Coordinated Management Plan (West Mojave Plan), a habitat conservation plan that is being prepared in accordance with section 10(a)(1)(B) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. §1539(a)(1)(B). This plan is described in greater detail in section C of this part of the Report.

Two listed species occur within the proposed Fort Irwin expansion area -- the desert tortoise and the Lane Mountain milkvetch. Training activities on the proposed Fort Irwin expansion lands will not proceed unless the Army determines, pursuant to section 7(a)(2) of the ESA, 16 U.S.C. §1536(a)(2), and

Comment ID: 2369 (Page 9 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 9 of 12):

in consultation with the FWS, that the training activities will not be likely to jeopardize the continued existence of these species or destroy or adversely modify any designated critical habitat. Critical habitat is defined as areas that contain the physical or biological features essential to the conservation of the species, and that may require special management considerations or protection. In 1994, the FWS designated critical habitat for the desert tortoise that includes substantial tracts of land on and around Fort Irwin, including the Superior Valley portion of the proposed expansion area. 59 Fed. Reg. 5820-5866 (1994). The FWS has not designated critical habitat for the Lane Mountain milkvetch.

While the proposed expansion area does encompass desert tortoise habitat, it avoids the important tortoise habitat immediately south and southwest of the proposed expansion area, including the Paradise Valley and the Coyote Basin. Based on surveys [by WHOM?] completed in 1998 and 1999, these areas apparently [i.e., NO evidence of] support some of the highest numbers of desert tortoises remaining in the West Mojave Desert.

While the desert tortoise has received most of the attention during the longstanding efforts by Interior and Army to accommodate an expansion of Fort Irwin, the milkvetch presents equally challenging questions to address during the consultation process. Two of the three known occurrences of the Lane Mountain milkvetch are within the proposed expansion area, and these are located within areas susceptible to training maneuvers (20% slopes). Other potential impacts of the proposed expansion that could occur on or off the expansion area include, but are not limited to, dust and obscuration. Potential habitat exists, however, outside the proposed expansion area on Lane Mountain and in the Paradise Range, and efforts will be made during the pre-consultation period to locate other populations in these and perhaps other areas outside the proposed expansion area.

A number of unlisted, but sensitive, plants and animals occur within the proposed expansion area. Animals include the LeConte's thrasher, Bendire's thrasher, golden eagle, prairie falcon, burrowing owl, and the state-listed Mohave ground squirrel. Major populations are present for LeConte's thrasher and Mohave ground squirrel. Plants include small-flowered androstaphium, desert cymopterus, Barstow woolly sunflower, alkali mariposa lily, and Clokey's cryptantha. The small annual plant, Clokey's cryptantha, is known from only two locations, and about half of its predicted distribution is within the proposed expansion area. Many of the mitigation measures that will be implemented to protect listed species, especially land acquisition, should have a salutary impact on these unlisted species.

B. Description and Purpose of West Mojave Desert Wildlife Management Areas.

The Desert Tortoise (Mojave Population) Recovery Plan (1994) recommended that four Desert Wildlife Management Areas (DWMA) be established within the West Mojave Desert: Superior-Cronese, Fremont-Kramer, Ord-Rodman, and Joshua Tree.

These areas consist of approximately 1.5 million acres of habitat that is considered essential to the conservation of tortoises.

Through the West Mojave planning process, biologists used 1998 and 1999 tortoise survey information, land ownership patterns, and discussion with scientists and [what?] agency personnel to propose DWMA boundaries for consideration by the West Mojave Supergroup, a group that includes federal, state, and local agency officials, as well as representatives of the environmental community and development interests.

The Superior Valley portion of the proposed expansion area lies within the Superior-Cronese DWMA.

**If the proposed expansion goes forward, the boundaries of this DWMA will need to be changed to exclude most of these lands.**

Comment ID: 2369 (Page 10 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 10 of 12):

C. Description and Purpose of Wilderness Study Areas.

Five former BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) identified in the 1980 California Desert Conservation Area Plan lie adjacent to the National Training Center. The Death Valley National Park Boundary, Kingston, Avawatz Mountains, South Avawatz Mountains, and Soda Mountains WSAs were legislatively designated in October 1994 by the California Desert Protection Act (CDPA) [S-21] and the public lands withdrawn from entry.

**The CDPA allowed these areas to remain under wilderness review pending a final decision on the National Training Center expansion.**

[PROOF - The "implementation rules" in THIS document all but PRECLUDE "Fort Irwin" from EVER being authorized to be as stated herein [HND OUT IF IT WAS!], THUS leaving ALL the above areas being ABSORBED in Feinsteins/Scarry Harry's 2011 Desert Protection Act - ALONG WITH THE "TWENTYNINE PALMS [29Palms]" BASE EXPANSION that has been set with similar "implementation rules" as has likely the "El Centro" base expansion - CREATING "ENVIRO HEAVEN" and 1,000s of ENVIRO JOBS - AND VOTES - LEAVING THE MILITARY CRIPPLED AND AMERICA DEFENSELESS.]

If Fort Irwin expands as proposed, conserving sensitive species in the western Mojave Desert will become more difficult, because most of the lands in the proposed expansion area will no longer be available for species conservation purposes.

The conservation measures proposed as part of the expansion should be taken into account as the West Mojave Coordinated Management Plan is developed.

Consequently, the development of the West Mojave Coordinated Management Plan and the proposed expansion of Fort Irwin should be coordinated closely to ensure that the adverse and beneficial impacts of both actions can be fully considered in the decision-making processes.

**Senator Feinstein's S-138 Bill**  
**The 2011 Update of the 1994 'Desert Protection Act**  
**Filed by Senator Reid "For Senator Feinstein"**

|                                                                     | Depth =<br>Height<br>km | Depth =<br>Height<br>mi | Width<br>km | Width<br>mi | (# Sections)<br>Square<br>Miles | Per Side<br>Miles | Acres  |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------|-------------|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------|
| <b>Transfer of BLM Managed Lands to Death Valley NP</b>             |                         |                         |             |             |                                 |                   |        |
| <b>S-21 UPDT Death Valley NP Expansion Just North of Fort Irwin</b> |                         |                         |             |             |                                 |                   |        |
| Finding                                                             | 2.37                    | 1.48                    | 96.32       | 25.00       | 51.63                           | 7.18              | 33,041 |
| SPECIALSpecified Width, Calc: Height A Joke >> ^                    |                         |                         |             |             |                                 |                   |        |
| <b>S-21 UPDT Crater Mine Area To Death Valley NP</b>                |                         |                         |             |             |                                 |                   |        |
| Finding                                                             | 2.00                    | 3.11                    | 3.18        | 3.21        | 9.97                            | 3.18              | 0,179  |
| SPECIALSpecified Width, Calc: Height A Joke >> ^                    |                         |                         |             |             |                                 |                   |        |



Comment ID: 2369 (Page 12 of 12)

Response to Comment 2369 (Page 12 of 12):

| S-21 UPDT                                     |                 | Raeor Valley (Ranch) Newly Designated OHV                                  |       |      |        |       |            |        |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|------|--------|-------|------------|--------|
| Finding                                       | Calc Dimensions | 30.00                                                                      | 18.04 | 3.82 | 1.88   | 35.00 | 5.92       | 22,400 |
|                                               |                 | A Jobe >>>>>>>>>> ^                                                        |       |      |        |       |            |        |
|                                               |                 | 3.95 Miles Southwest Znyox, CA                                             |       |      |        |       |            |        |
| S-21 UPDT                                     |                 | Spangler Hills Newly Designated OHV                                        |       |      |        |       |            |        |
| Finding                                       | Calc Dimensions | 30.00                                                                      | 18.04 | 8.37 | 5.20   | 97.00 | 9.85       | 62,080 |
|                                               |                 | A Jobe >>>>>>>>>> ^                                                        |       |      |        |       |            |        |
|                                               |                 | 6.50 Miles Southeast of Ridgecrest, CA                                     |       |      |        |       |            |        |
| S-21 UPDT                                     |                 | Stoddard Valley                                                            |       |      |        |       |            |        |
| Finding                                       | Calc Dimensions | 30.00                                                                      | 18.04 | 7.34 | 4.58   | 85.00 | 9.22       | 54,400 |
|                                               |                 | A Jobe >>>>>>>>>> ^                                                        |       |      |        |       |            |        |
|                                               |                 | 6.75 Miles South of Barstow, CA<br>23.50 Miles North of Lucerne Valley, CA |       |      |        |       |            |        |
| Total Sq Mi For Public Use (HOV) >            |                 |                                                                            |       |      | 498.25 | 22.32 | 318,880.00 |        |
| Equiv Townships >                             |                 |                                                                            |       |      | 13.84  |       |            |        |
| Total BLM Lands Transferred to All Entities > |                 |                                                                            |       |      | 615.19 | 24.80 | 393,719.00 |        |
| Equiv Townships >                             |                 |                                                                            |       |      | 17.09  |       |            |        |

Sincerely,  
 Dehnert Queen  
 Lucerne Valley, CA  
 215-500-6544

**Comment ID** 2370

**Last Name** HANSON

**First Name** MARK

**Comment** WITH THE ENTIRE DESERT SURROUNDING THE MILITARY BASE, THEY COULD MOVE EAST TOWARDS LESS ESTABLISHED AREAS.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2371

**Last Name** Spindler

**First Name** Kathleen

**Comment** To: Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest ATTN: 29Palms EIS Project Manager 1220 Pacific Highway San Diego, CA 92132-5190  
Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on 29Palms Base expansion  
Dear Sir: The communities of Landers and Johnson Valley are in Postal Zip Code 92285. Landers borders the existing Marine Air Ground Combat Center 29Palms; Johnson Valley is directly southwest of it, and due south of the proposed westward expansion area. Environmental Justice provisions are addressed in the DEIS because Federal Projects are not supposed to have disproportionate impacts against any ethnic, demographic or socio-economic group. IN POSTAL CODE 92285, CENSUS 2010 HAS STATED: The population is 2,181. The median age of the population is 49.5. 24.7% are 65 years and over. This is almost twice the percentage of people 65 and older in the US population (12.4%). These are very much senior citizen communities. Many residents are retired and on fixed incomes. 39% of our population 16 and over is in the labor force, as compared to 69% in the US. Families below poverty level: 20.8% In the US: 12.4% Individuals below poverty level: 24.9% In the US: 12.4% Disability status (population 5 years and over): 34.8% In the US: 19.3% And for good measure: Civilian veterans (civilian population 18 years and over): 25.1% In the US 12.7% (and we know many are proud Marines)

[http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?\\_event=Search&geo\\_id=&\\_geoContext=&\\_street=&\\_county=92285&\\_cityTown=92285&\\_state=&\\_zip=92285&\\_lang=en&\\_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show\\_2003\\_tab=&redirect=Y](http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFFacts?_event=Search&geo_id=&_geoContext=&_street=&_county=92285&_cityTown=92285&_state=&_zip=92285&_lang=en&_sse=on&pctxt=fph&pgsl=010&show_2003_tab=&redirect=Y) The factors listed above indicate the project does raise issues of Environmental Justice for the residents of Landers and Johnson Valley. The DEIS states that EO 12898 criteria for Environmental Justice say there must be one or more such affected populations within the DEIS area (Page 533). However, very few live WITHIN the EIS area, and it is therefore a contradiction to imply that residents outside the EIS area will not be impacted. The scoping issues (Item 4.3.1.3) listed on the same page include: Decrease of revenue and employment and associated tax revenue from tourism recreational and film industries Devaluation of surrounding private property. Increased costs to federal, state and local jurisdictions for increased law enforcement. The contradiction is the DEIS states that the primary economic impacts would be from displacement of certain activities within the DEIS area causing financial and other hardships to surrounding areas. Therefore the DEIS must be revised to state the criteria for judging Environmental Justice are too narrow, and must state that these criteria also apply to populations outside the DEIS area. Anything less would be easily misunderstood by a less-than-careful reader. Landers and Johnson Valley are within the impact area of the DEIS because of activities that are associated with current ac

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2372

**Last Name** corral

**First Name** joe

**Comment** Our State is huge but OHV riding areas are very limited here in southern California. Considering all the land the federal govt controls why can't the Marines use another area. In the last few years we have lost our trails in the Angeles Forest region. We love,honor, and respect the Marines but the Feds should find another location.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

**Comment ID** 2373

**Last Name** Barnes

**First Name** Mark

**Comment** Given the Alternatives presented, I strongly support only Alternative A. Given the fatal flaws in the analysis, the public objection to the project and the national economic crisis I believe the base expansion as proposed in the DEIS should be withdrawn.

**Date Comment Received** 5/27/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2374

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please DO NOT allow the military to take over the OHV recreational areas in Johnson Valley. The military already has hundreds of thousands of

acres of suitable training grounds. Why steal this small parcel from us off-road enthusiasts? Balance the needs of the people who are paying, through heavy taxation, with 80% of their tax bill going to the military, against a greedy, inefficient government arm who DO NOT NEED MORE LAND for their purposes. OHV recreationalists are real-estate poor. The military is rich enough already. In other words, stop STEALING FROM THE POOR to give to the RICH.

**Date Comment Received** 5/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. As described in Section 1.3 of the EIS, the purpose of the proposed action is to fulfill a Marine Corps training requirement. In November 2006, the Marine Corps validated the need to establish a large- scale training area for live fire and maneuver training of a Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB) composed of three battalion task forces. Currently, the Combat Center can only accommodate live-fire and maneuver training for up to two battalion task forces. Additional land area is needed to ensure adequate separation distances for operation of the three battalions required for MEB-sized training.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

**Comment ID** 2375

**Last Name** barbarino

**First Name** vincent

**Comment** even the CA OHV commission unanimously opposes the expansion. find another way. do not expand into JV

**Date Comment Received** 5/28/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2376

**Last Name** Arlin

**First Name** Paul

**Comment** As an off-highway vehicle enthusiast I write to urge you to support the "no action" alternative in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement - Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment To Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training. I recognize that the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) notes that no action...is not a viable alternative since it does not meet the purpose and need; However, none of the 6 proposed alternatives, including preferred alternative 6, adequately address all issues including providing for recreation, particularly motorized recreation. Local riders, and many from adjoining regions, have been pushed off of public lands and out of many areas of the desert for decades. While I understand that the Marines have a vital mission, there simply must be a better way to provide for adequate training while not essentially eliminating responsible access to Johnson Valley for motorized recreationists. I encourage you to withdraw the DEIS in favor of developing a new DEIS with a broadened range of alternatives that include options that allow for the continued responsible use of off-highway vehicles (OHVs), and that recognize the vital economic impact that motorized recreation has in the area.

**Date Comment Received** 5/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. The public involvement process has led to the development of project alternatives (e.g., Alternatives 4, 5, and 6) that would enable the Marine Corps to meet the minimum live-fire and maneuver training requirements for a MEB while also providing public access to as much of the Johnson Valley area as possible for recreational use. Please refer to Sections 2.5 and 4.2 of the EIS. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific

portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2377

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** Please do not close or take any more of the johnson vally off highway are out by twenty nine palms. We our family (kids, aunts, uncles, parents, grandparent and friends) all enjoy the outdoors and sharing in teaching our kids nature. The population continues to grow and they keep on reducing the amount of open area to enjoy. Also, if you close these area, then it makes it to costly to drive farther and shortens the important time with family and friends.

**Date Comment Received** 5/30/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2378

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I am wholeheartedly against the US Marine Corp expansion that would lead to any loss of Johnson Valley Off-Highway Vehicle area. Please consider other alternatives that have less impact on lands that are enjoyed by

thousands of Americans. These lands provide recreational opportunities that can not be replaced. Furthermore, the local economy depends on this recreation to provide additional financial activity.

**Date Comment Received** 5/31/2011

**Response**

Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The EIS evaluates socioeconomic impacts under each of the action alternatives (see Section 4.3). As noted in the EIS, there is expected to be a direct economic impact to individual small businesses that are dependent on limited recreational visitor spending and direct regional impacts from lost sales and tax revenue related to reduced recreational and film industry spending.

**Comment ID** 2379

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I DO NOT support the Corps taking away CA. Largest OHV area (Johnson Valley). I feel America has plenty of unused areas for the Corps to utilize. As proud Americans we spent a lovely Memorial Weekend 2011 there with talks of our grandfathers while creating new memories. Here's an idea.. Texas, USA!

**Date Comment Received** 5/31/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2380

**Last Name** Perez

**First Name** Gary

**Comment** The Johnson Valley is critical to the freedom and use of the off-road enthusiasts and ask that our voices be heard and respected. Please keep this land open to the public as many years of riding and memories would be needlessly done away with. With technology, I do not believe this land is necessary to acquire that our armed forces will use for actual use. I salute our soldiers, however this land belongs to those who use it and respect it namely the off-road community. Thank you and God bless the United States of America!!!

**Date Comment Received** 6/1/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

**Comment ID** 2381

**Last Name** Name Withheld by Request

**First Name**

**Comment** I wanted to comment on the 29 Palms expansion into Johnson Valley Of-Highway Vehicle Area. The OHV areas are getting smaller every year as the off-road community is attacked by anti-access groups. I can't believe the Marines now want to attach the off-road community by taking away one of the best OHV areas around. The Marines can expand to the East without displacing a group who can't move somewhere else. There's no movement for the off-road community. The Marines on the other hand can move a different direction and leave a long time riding area open to the public that supports the Marines.

**Date Comment Received** 6/4/2011

**Response** Thank you for your comment. The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the reduction in availability of OHV land would cause significant impacts to recreation under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact. The analyses presented in the EIS acknowledge and discuss the impacts that reduced recreational lands in Johnson Valley would have on increased usage and potential overcrowding in other areas, as well as related impacts to other environmental resources.

As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).

Public comments on the Draft EIS are an important part of the decision-making process. This information becomes part of the Final EIS and will be evaluated by the Department of the Navy during its decision process. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action. The Marine Corps appreciates your comment and involvement in the NEPA process.

|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2382                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Weigelt                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Brian                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Comment</b>               | <p>To whom this concerns; i am an officer and an off road person with a family and we love the outdoors. My family loves to go out wheelin and camping all over the united states and out in the johnson valley area. I teach my boys about our land and how important it is. Also i teach them to take care of it for future generations to come. We, are family respect the land and do are part in packing in packing out, what we bring. Please don't take it away there are alternitives and I, we also believe in the military and trainning. But i have other ideas for where that should happen, just with the president would listen. Thank you for your time. Brian</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 6/5/2011                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Response</b>              | <p>Thank you for your comment and suggestions for project alternatives. As discussed in Section 2.7 of the EIS, the Marine Corps considered other alternatives for the proposed action, including suggestions offered by members of the public during the public scoping period in late 2008. Several alternative scenarios were considered and eliminated from detailed study (including conducting the proposed MEB-sized MAGTF Training at other military bases in the U.S.) because they did not meet the purpose of and need for the proposed action or did not satisfy the minimum screening criteria for identifying suitable lands for acquisition (as described in Section 2.3 of the EIS).</p> <p>The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.</p> |

**Appendix N – Response to Public Comments on the Draft EIS**

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|                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Comment ID</b>            | 2383                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Last Name</b>             | Miller                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>First Name</b>            | Clayton                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Comment</b>               | Please find attached comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training dated February 2011, submitted by Clayton Miller on May 26, 2011. |
| <b>Date Comment Received</b> | 5/25/2011                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Response</b>              | Thank you for your comment. Please see the response to comment on the attached letter.                                                                                                                                                                                                     |

**Comment ID: 2383 (Page 1 of 3)**

May 25, 2011

*Via Email*

Naval Facilities Engineering Command, Southwest  
ATTN: Twentynine Palms EIS Project Manager  
1220 Pacific Highway  
San Diego, California 92132-5190

**Re: Draft Environmental Impact Statement on Proposed Twentynine Palms Marine Base Expansion**

Dear Project Manager:

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training dated February 2011. I recognize the extensive amount of work and effort behind the preparation of the document. However, the DEIS contains a serious flaw that must be addressed and corrected before the analysis can be finalized.

**Screening Criteria is Flawed**

The DEIS describes that the Screening Criteria and alternatives used to systematically identify the range of reasonable alternatives carried forward for analysis were ratified by the project's Executive Steering Committee, which was comprised of Marine Corps leadership. The objective and threshold training requirements and generic MEB Exercise training template described in the DEIS directly influenced the development and application of the screening criteria, which were used to identify and evaluate potential alternatives for the proposed action. To be considered a viable and reasonable alternative according to the screening committee, any land acquisition and airspace modification/establishment scenario must satisfy all of the established conditions (at least to a threshold level where appropriate). There are 8 screening criteria listed, and criteria number 5 specifies that the EIS will "Avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges designated critical habitat for threatened or endangered species, cities/towns, and interstate highways."

The DEIS however does not provide an explanation or justification as to why the decision of the Executive Steering Committee (i.e. Marine Corps) to avoid congressionally-designated wilderness areas was established as a planning criteria. It simply states this determination, and this decision significantly influences and serves as the foundation for the development of the alternatives evaluated in the DEIS. At the same time, the screening criteria fails to include a condition to avoid areas in which congressional action will be required to remove from public use large portions of a federally managed Off-highway Vehicle Area (Johnson Valley OHV Area). No explanation or justification is given for this decision either. As a result, Alternatives

1

**Response to Comment 2383 (Page 1 of 3):**

Thank you for your comment. During the planning process, the Marine Corps determined that the de-designation of wilderness areas was not a viable option. Screening criteria #5 (see Section 2.3.1 of the EIS) states that any alternatives selected would avoid congressionally designated wilderness areas, parks, wildlife refuges, etc. The objective and threshold training requirements and generic MEB Exercise training template described in Section 2.2, *MEB Training Requirements and Representative MEB Exercise Template*, directly influenced the development and application of the screening criteria described in the EIS. Some of the screening criteria are exclusionary in nature, representing conditions that must be true for an alternative to be considered reasonable. Only alternatives (with the exception of the No-Action Alternative, see Section 2.4.7) that would satisfy the criteria described in the EIS were considered reasonable and carried forward for detailed evaluation. Ultimately, Congress will make the final decision about proceeding with the proposed action.

**Comment ID: 2383 (Page 2 of 3)**

1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were developed and include expansion scenarios into the Johnson Valley OHV Area.

It would appear that screening criteria 5 is based on a political calculation of the Executive Steering Committee that the potential re-designation and withdrawal from public use of one type of land use (wilderness<sup>1</sup>) is not acceptable while the re-designation and withdrawal of another land use type is (a unique federally managed OHV area<sup>2</sup>). The withdrawal of federal lands from public use are decisions for Congress to ultimately make, not a federal department. Therefore, to examine a full range of potential alternatives for base expansion, the DEIS needs to be modified to include Screening Criteria for analysis that 1) also considers a withdrawal of a portion of a wilderness area(s) or 2) also removes from consideration any areas upon which future congressional action is required for the withdrawal of a significant portion of federally managed OHV areas. Either of these approaches would level the playing field and treat each potential withdrawal equally, and thus allow a thorough review of the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project that is not pre-decisional or prejudiced. To do otherwise is neither reasonable nor appropriate.

Preferred Alternative 6 states "Access to and use of approximately 56% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be lost. This resource is unique to the region."<sup>iii</sup> On the other hand, there are 3,878,113 acres of wilderness in California under BLM jurisdiction. Regionally, there are only 380,753 acres of BLM OHV Areas, representing approximately 62% of total BLM OHV Areas in the state. The loss of public access to Johnson Valley would be significant. Under Alternative 1, the loss of OHV acreage regionally available would be 47%; Alternative 2, 30%; Alternative 3, no loss; Alternative 4, 47%; Alternative 5, 47% and Alternative 6, 29%. Screening Criteria number 5 points the DEIS in a direction that will result in significant and adverse impacts and prevents other possible planning alternatives potentially much less so from moving forward.

To correct this, the DEIS must address the flaw in the Screening Criteria described above. The public will benefit from review of additional alternatives as will the region and local communities that would be most affected by a base expansion. Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Respectfully,

Clayton Miller  
1059 Amador Street  
Claremont, CA 91711  
(909) 815-3780

**Response to Comment 2383 (Page 2 of 3):**

The Marine Corps understands the importance of Johnson Valley for recreation and the EIS analysis finds that acquisition of land within Johnson Valley would cause a significant impact to recreation, even under alternatives involving restricted public access to acquired areas. Under each of the action alternatives, many of the current recreational opportunities and uses would continue to be available within specific portions of Johnson Valley and during various portions of the year.

The Marine Corps understands the trend in availability of OHV land and has considered the loss of OHV land over time in Chapter 5 under cumulative impacts to Recreation (see Section 5.4.2 of the EIS). The EIS finds that the loss of availability of OHV land would be a significant impact under the proposed action as well as a significant cumulative impact.

Comment ID: 2383 (Page 3 of 3)

Response to Comment 2383 (Page 3 of 3):

<sup>1</sup> The BLM is responsible for 85 wilderness areas in California that total 3,878,113 acres. See [http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/wa\\_list.html](http://www.blm.gov/ca/pa/wilderness/wa/wa_list.html)

<sup>2</sup> Johnson Valley is the largest BLM managed OHV in California. Table 4.2-2 illustrates this point. Further information about BLM managed OHV Areas in California can also be found here. [http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm\\_special\\_areas/NLCS/summary\\_tables.html](http://www.blm.gov/wo/st/en/prog/blm_special_areas/NLCS/summary_tables.html)

Table 4.2-2: Regional OHV Acreages

| Recreation Areas                | Acres          |
|---------------------------------|----------------|
| Johnson Valley                  | 189,470        |
| Spangler Hills                  | 57,000         |
| Stoddard Valley                 | 53,000         |
| Rasor                           | 30,000         |
| El Mirage                       | 24,000         |
| Dumont Dunes                    | 8,150          |
| Kevesville                      | 7,133          |
| Jawbone                         | 7,000          |
| Dove Springs                    | 5,000          |
| <b>TOTAL Regional OHV Acres</b> | <b>380,753</b> |

Under Preferred Alternative 6, "access to and use of approximately 56% of the Johnson Valley OHV Area would be lost. This resource is unique to the region." Further, the impact to Regional OHV is illustrated in Table 4.2-3 here:

Table 4.2-3: Percentage Loss of Regional OHV Acreages under each Alternative

| Alternative   | Loss of Open OHV Acreages | Total Regional OHV Acres | Percent Loss of Regional OHV Acreages |
|---------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Alternative 1 | 180,353                   | 380,753                  | 47%                                   |
| Alternative 2 | 113,558                   | 380,753                  | 30%                                   |
| Alternative 3 | NA (1)                    | NA (1)                   | 100%                                  |
| Alternative 4 | 180,353 (2)               | 380,753                  | 47%                                   |
| Alternative 5 | 180,353 (2)               | 380,753                  | 47%                                   |
| Alternative 6 | 108,530 (3)               | 380,753                  | 29%                                   |

Notes: 1. Alternative 3 is not applicable (NA) since the east study area is not an open OHV area.  
 2. Acreages lost under Alternatives 4 and 5 would only occur 2 months per year.  
 3. Acreages lost under Alternative 6 includes the exclusive military use area only since 38,137 acres would be available for restricted public access 10 months per year.

<sup>3</sup> ES-17, Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Land Acquisition and Airspace Establishment to Support Large-Scale Marine Air Ground Task Force Live Fire and Maneuver Training, Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, CA, Volume 1, February 2011,